

Butch/Femme

Freeing the Butch or....Femme

By Steph Miserlis

I've always been attracted to the more femme in our world, the strong body-connected femme. And with that comes the frustration of not being butch enough. Just last year, I found myself drawn to a lovely strong woman. We met, enjoyed each other's company, spent time together, and I made my move. I was told, "Sorry, not butch enough." And I've heard that before.... so what the hell is butch? I've asked my expert friends. "It's an energy," or "It's when someone sits down at a table, you know they're right there at the table." Uh-huh. Or the ever comforting and age-old, "You have to figure that one on your own."

I enjoy many things which I've assumed were butch—like building, using power tools, fixing things, taking action, and not having to dress up for gatherings. Although, over the years, I've learned that not having to dress up is a farce. My very butch friend explained that true butches dress up to look like they did not dress up. Who knew? No wonder the butch thing always feels so elusive to me. I remember going to the famous local butch/femme parties as butch. And still, even though I played it up, freed myself from my usual daily constraints, I still did not feel as "butch" as the gangsta butches, or the elegant tuxedoed butches dancing up a storm with all their femmes.

Funny thing is, when I went to the butch/femme party as a femme—I loved it. I felt right at home. I was flirting. I felt like I could be more sexual, more aggressive—as femme. I licked a friend's face. Strange occurrence, but fun. She didn't seem to mind. And I found myself dancing more sexually, and more aggressively. I didn't feel comfortable in the clothes—but playing that role

Freeing continues on page 4



One very lucky femme out on the town with two elegant butches.

So Femme It Hurts

By Olivia Kobelt

I am so femme it hurts. I walk into a lesbian bar and observe the looks that suggest the question, "What's the straight girl doing here?" I think to myself, "Do I need to cut my hair to get a date?" No! Because that wouldn't be me. That would be false advertising.

Jump to Scene II. "Wow, she is sooo yummy. But she's probably straight." Scene II repeats itself over and over, like a scratched record. Yes, to compound the dilemma, I am femme seeking femme. The women I am attracted to send me into a frenzy of questions. How can I tell if she's flirting or simply clueless? How can I even express my own interest? How can I possibly find out if she likes me that way without scaring her off if she doesn't?

Hurts continues on page 7

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Volunteers of the Month

Gail Zacharias
Robyn Ochs
Deb Morley
Wayne Bryant
Katrina Poehler
Anne Hurley
[REDACTED]
Olivia Kobelt
Mizblooze56
Gina
Alison Bechdel
Steph Miserlis

And many more
fabulous people!
You know who
you are!

BiWomen is published bi-monthly.

Editor:

Ellyn Ruthstrom

**Printed on
recycled paper**

The Boston Bisexual Women's Network is a feminist, not-for-profit collective organization whose purpose is to bring women together for support and validation. It is meant to be a safe environment in which women of all sexual self-identities, class backgrounds, racial, ethnic and religious groups, ages, abilities and disabilities are welcome. Through the vehicles of discussion, support, education, outreach, political action and social groups related to bisexuality, we are committed to the goals of full acceptance as bisexuals within the gay and lesbian community, and to full acceptance of bisexuality and the liberation of all gay people within the larger society.

Onward and Upward

Wow, another newsletter is ready to be put to bed, as we say in the trade, and I almost forgot to write my editor's notes. Not really forgot, just procrastinated til the last minute. When we last heard from our editor she was in a rather foul mood from various bad news at the end of 2004. Ever the optimist, she's up off the mat and wading into the new year. Now, if she would only stop referring to herself in the third person.

I want to thank Carolyn Taylor for loaning me some of the great photographs you see in this issue of the newsletter. Carolyn was the host of an annual Butch/Femme Party in Somerville that grew from a small circle of friends partying in her apartment to over a hundred women taking over a VFW hall. Each year women would tell their friends and more people would keep showing up.

And each year the creativity around the costumes would get more imaginative. Butches and femmes of different decades would appear, lounge lizards, sailors, vamps, jocks, dominatrix, drag queens, cowgirls, and construction workers, to name just a few. It was great to see people come one year as butch and the next year as high femme. It was great to see a woman who on any regular day would identify as butch, but on this one night she'd appear in a slinky miniskirt, makeup, and wig. Or the lipstick lesbian suddenly appear in a military uniform and fake moustache.

On page 1, Steph Miserlis describes some of her own "experimentation" at these parties. Some of it was very freeing for her, and I dare say, for many people who attended these parties. Even if you are someone who doesn't choose to identify as butch or femme, you can probably relate to another identity that you have felt limited by. Remember how freeing (and perhaps scary) it was to travel outside the lines? Hmmm, maybe it was when you were coming out? Anyway, the moral of the story is to not to let any identity confine you, but if you find one that suits you...Enjoy it!

Ellyn Ruthstrom

NEXT IN *BiWOMEN*

The *BiWomen* theme for
April/May is:

Heavy Petting: Bis and Our Pets

Tell us about your relationships with animals. Cats, dogs, ferrets, fish—whatever you feed and care for on a daily basis. What do they add to your life, what have you learned from them? And, yes, please provide photos.

Deadline: March 18, 2005

FUTURE ISSUES

June/July
???????

Send your suggestions for future topics to
nellythrustmor@aol.com

PLEASE SUBMIT TO *BiWOMEN*!

Send articles, calendar entries, letters,
black-and-white art, news, and views to:

BiWomen

P.O. Box 400639

Cambridge, MA 02140

or via e-mail to

NellyThrustmor@aol.com

*If you do not want your name
published, please tell us.*

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this newsletter are copyrighted
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BBWN Financial Statement 1/1/04 through 12/31/04

Balance forward 1/1/04: \$3348.78

Expenses

Printing	2220.81
Postal fees & postage	1474.90
Supplies	17.95
Merchandise purchased	827.00
Event expenses	514.79
Donation to IBC8 Scholarship fund	250.00
Total expenses	\$5305.45

Income

Dues	1325.00
Merchandise	1596.60
Bank Interest	10.85
Donations	200.00
Event income	350.00
Advertising	0
Book project income	1610.93
Total income:	\$5093.38

Balance as of 12/31/04 \$3136.71

Note: In the first half report, a deposit was mistakenly counted twice, artificially inflating income for book sales. The numbers above reflect the corrected figures.

Remember, BBWN is important! At 22, we are the oldest bi women's group in the world, and *BiWomen* is the third oldest continuous bi publication in the world (after *Bi Nieuws* in the Netherlands and *Bi Community News* in the UK). We have no paid staff, and no regular sources of income. We have a longstanding policy of making *BiWomen* available to everyone, regardless of their ability to pay, and the newsletter is given away at conferences and other public venues, and is mailed free of charge to many colleges and other community organizations. For many women, *BiWomen* is their first affirmation of bisexuality.

Checks can be sent to BBWN or, if you wish your donation to be tax-deductible, you may channel it through our parent organization, the BRC (both groups: P.O. Box 400639, Cambridge MA 02140), but be sure to put "for BBWN in the comment line." And please think about donating books to the book project! Contact Robyn 617-413-2717 or robyn@robynocho.com for details.

Submitted by Robyn Ochs, Treasurer for BBWN since 1989

Brunch Coordinator Wants You to Host!

BBWN potluck brunches are a great way to meet other bi women in the Boston area. We try to hold a brunch in a member's home each month so that people can relax and share food and experiences in a safe space. Deb Morley is the brunch coordinator, so please contact her at debmo345@comcast.net if you are interested in hosting a brunch. Thanks Deb for volunteering! And check out the calendar on pages 11-12 for the brunches and other activities coming up in February and March. Hope you can join us.

Letter to the Editor

Dear Ellyn,

Thank you for all your good work and dedication in getting *BiWomen* together and out there. Also, thank you for honestly sharing about your "blue mood" in the last issue. It has helped me to understand as a new reader a larger sense of the dimension, operation, and functioning of this newsletter. It is valuable to have the publication in paper and ink for greater accessibility and visibility. Ultimately, this inspires me to be involved. I look forward to making contributions in the future.

Personally, sending you wishes for continued strength and renewed joys and riches,

Ann



Just a few of the bodacious bowlers who came out for the BBWN bowling and brunch outing in November. Check out the calendar on pages 11-12 to see when the next time we'll be hitting the lanes.

Thanks so much, Ann, for your kind and supportive words. It's always great to hear from our readers and I look forward to your future contributions. Readers, feel free to write to *BiWomen* with your thoughts, suggestions for topics, commentary on what you read in the newsletter. It's great to have some discussion between readers. Send them to nellythrustmor@aol.com or to BBWN, P.O. Box 400639, Cambridge, MA 02140. Ellyn

Massachusetts Money Conference for Women

The Money Conference for Women is a free conference series presented by Massachusetts' Treasurer Timothy P. Cahill and the YWCA New England Regional Council. The conference will focus on money management, retirement and investment strategies for all ages, racial, ethnic and economic backgrounds, and levels of financial knowledge. Free breakfast and lunch, and free childcare will be provided, but registration is required. Included in the conference will be a presentation by Dee Lee, author of "Women & Money Your Personal Finance Guide," breakout sessions in the morning and afternoon, and the opportunity to meet one-on-one with a financial advisor. The identical conference will be held on two separate days:

February 12, 2005

8 a.m.-3 p.m. at Framingham State College, Framingham

March 19, 2005

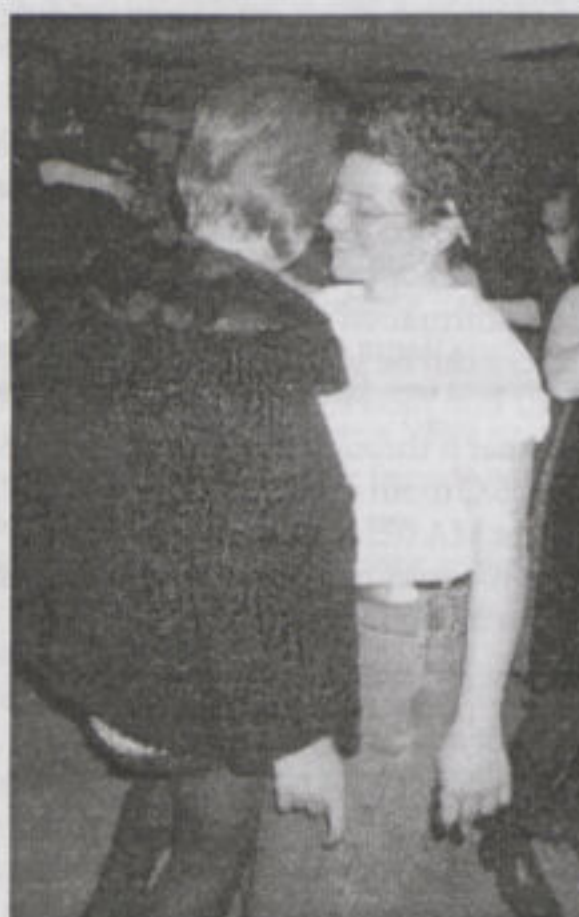
8 a.m.-3 p.m. at Western New England College, Springfield

For more information, visit www.themoneyconference.com or call 617-367-6900.

Freeing from page 1

freed me somehow.

Do certain roles, by convention, have more freedom to be more sexual? Or is it exciting to just bend a role? Or maybe it's me—maybe a "true" butch wouldn't feel sexually aggressive



Steph in her "cigarette pack rolled up in her t-shirt" butch persona.

I don't consider myself to be butch or femme. I am a strange mixture of the two on any given day, to greater or lesser degrees of each. It's varied over my life, in terms of identity, fashion, roles with partners, etc. I don't like to be pigeon-holed as one or the other—just like my sexuality! It sometimes annoys me when a friend of mine gets really obsessed with butch/femme dynamics because it doesn't click with me in terms of identity, but more in terms of things happening in particular moments. Also, I don't like to equate butch with assertive or femme with passive, or butch with "person who kills bugs and fixes things" and femme with "person who has way too many personal care products and likes to talk about feelings" because that's so often not the case. I'm not really sure what each label is about, but in any case, this is yet another area where I don't want to pick just one thing.

Julie Ebin

playing femme! Is it simply easier to feel more sexually alive or free, playing outside of yourself? Maybe I'm more socially constrained than I care to admit. However, if I were truly being myself all the time, would I go around licking people's faces?

Honestly, does anyone truly know what butch or femme means? If we were to ask just our friends, I doubt we'd have a consistent list of qualifications. The other day, a bunch of us were at a club, sitting at a corner table, talking away. One woman, who walked up to the table and chatted a bit, confounded us. We could not



And Steph in her "sexy, shiny lamé" femme persona.

agree on her role. Absolutely butch, I felt. Another friend staunchly felt she was femme. We even came up with an option for the disagreement—we must have been talking about the wrong woman, who had been right in front of us!

As someone who has explored the bisexual world, I guess I've come to terms with living with some ambiguity. I don't always know where I fit. It's always somewhere in between butch and femme, dyke and straight, friend and lover, mind and heart. To me, it is no longer important to know what butch or femme means. Sadly, the hardest part, at this ripe age, is knowing what freedom means. ▼

Butch and Femme

By Anne Hurley

My first reaction to writing something on the butch/femme theme was to express how much I didn't like the concept that I might be judged by my appearance. For me, a big part of identifying as bi is wanting to get out of confining boxes. Then I thought of friends and potential friends who do identify as butch or femme, and I remembered that I have a fundamental openness and interest in whatever is. I know there's a lot I don't know about being butch or femme, and I want to enrich my life by adding more understanding around this theme

Back to my initial reaction. Sometimes I like to wear a skirt, sometimes pants. Mostly pants, though, because I find it more comfortable, better for freedom of movement. But there are times when I'm inclined to "dress up" a bit including a dress and even a little makeup and fussing with my hair. The main thing is that I don't want to be categorized. It seems absurd to me that someone would make a judgment about me, about whether they'd like to get to know me, based on whether I'm wearing open-toed sandals with a little heel or hiking boots.

Androgyny is an important concept for me, and what that means for me is incorporating into my being the best characteristics of both what is culturally considered to be female and what is culturally considered to be male. Analytic and intuitive thinking. Mechanical and emotional competence. Decisiveness and fluidity. Strength and tenderness, etc.

Just as I don't want to deny or minimize the part of me that is attracted to males, I don't want to deny or minimize the part of me that is male inside. I don't want to deny or minimize the part of me that is attracted to females, or the fact that I'm female. I don't want to be imprisoned, acting out only one role in the male-female gender dance we live within our culture.

Now that I've stated my reasons for my negative reaction to the idea of the butch/femme divide, I'll get back to my more balanced, mature reaction. I'm looking forward to reading this issue of the newsletter, and hearing what other women say about it that will open my understanding and enrich my life. ▼

Women & the Media Conference

The Center for New Words presents WAM! 2005: WOMEN & the MEDIA: Taking Our Place in the Public Conversation. WAM! will be held March 18-20, 2005 at the Stata Center at MIT in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Tired of what you hear on the nightly news and the absence of women sources, speakers, pundits, and subjects? Then visit the annual conference where progressive readers, listeners, activists, authors, students, journalists, and concerned citizens meet, share skills, and strategize to increase women's influence in the media. This year's keynotes are Medea Benjamin, Daisy Hernandez, Maria Hinojosa, and Jill Nelson. Register now at www.centerfornewwords.org/wam2005.html or call 617-876-5310.

The Butch/Femme Dance

By Ellyn Ruthstrom

I think after you spend a fair amount of time in the queer women's community, the whole supposed butch/femme dichotomy becomes a small part of a larger language that you take on to describe your culture. I said *supposed* dichotomy because to me butches and femmes are not diametric opposites to each other, they are a synergy. I love the interplay between the varied ways that women express their gender. And I love watching the exchange that goes on between butch and femme women, though I am not saying that plenty doesn't go on between butches, between femmes, and between women who could care less about these identities. I simply like to watch—and participate in—the butch/femme dance.

Let's face it, a lot of us think of these identities as "a look." Say the word butch and many of us would think of a woman who has short or easy to manage hair, wears no makeup (but smelling good is a butch's secret weapon), tends to dress exclusively in pants, and would generally be described as a more

masculine woman. For a femme, we might think of an image of a woman who puts more attention into her appearance, a woman who enjoys making use of makeup, clothes, and well-tended hair to present herself in the world.

But beyond the look, there's a lot more involved with how the butch/femme energy plays out in queer culture. Traditionally, butches are the women who are considered gender transgressors because they do not try to nor do they want to fit into the norm of a feminine gender. They are the ones that straight people would more easily identify as queer and also probably what they base many limiting stereotypes of queer women upon.

Dance continues on page 6



This femme has quite a handful with this country butch.

GLBT Helpline Needs You!

If you self identify as LGBT/Queer/ Genderqueer, and have 5 hours per month to spare, then check out The Peer Listening Line and GLBT Helpline of Fenway Community Health. The Helpline provides information, referral and support to queer, lesbian, bisexual, gay, transgender, and genderqueer callers through their anonymous toll-free nationwide lines. If you are interested in volunteering, contact the Program Coordinator, Lyssa Steponaitis at lsteponaitis@fenwayhealth.org or 617-927-6242 for a volunteer application. We are especially in need of people of color, women, bisexual, transgender, and genderqueer volunteers. The Helpline accepts volunteer 16 years of age and up. The next new volunteer training will be held February 25-27, 2005. Help be the voice that answers our phone.

Dance from page 5

Femmes may travel under the radar (so to speak) and not be identified as quickly as queer, but that is a double-edged sword when you are trying to have other interested women find you. Femmes have fought the misperception that they are trying to pass as straight just because on the surface they may appear to use the more standard straight women's attire and accessories. But many femmes get a thrill out of the contradiction and want it to be acknowledged that they are taking time to look good and attract other women. And something that I find in queer women's community is that femme women are not interpreted as being weak or vulnerable just because they may be presenting as "feminine." I love that.

Butch/femme has a proud history in queer women's communities. It was used as a source of protection, even to the extent of some butches being able to pass as men and give the couple a façade of respectable heterosexuality. Some say the roles were imitations of male/female relationships and so perhaps just as restrictive as those roles were in those days. Others interpret the roles more positively as ways to accept the differences among women.

As a bi woman, I see a common tendency in our own community to dislike labels, roles, and stereotypes. That makes sense to me because so many of us bridge communities, lifestyles, and often cultures, in the partners we choose. We value freedom of gender expression, sexuality expression, and affectional choice. I think some bis react to the butch/femme concept as too confining. "Don't

tell me if I'm a femme that I can only be attracted to butch women." And I totally agree with that. But I also know that the butch/femme interplay is something very real in our community and it can help describe some situations better than others.

I consider myself femme. My last girlfriend nicknamed me an Action Femme. The term describes a femme who feels comfortable being assertive, who has confidence, who knows what she wants and isn't going to wait around for a butch (or anyone) to handle something if she can do it just as well herself. I am more generally attracted to butch women, but not exclusively. (And the men I'm attracted to are usually just the opposite: brainy, non-macho, sensitive types. Go figure. I guess that's when I want to be the butch. Ha!) As a strong woman, I don't want to be taken care of, but I am attracted to a person who allows me not to have to be strong all the time. As I mentioned earlier, I want to be able to be vulnerable, but not have it seen it as a weakness. And really, who among us doesn't want that, right?

And then, what does all this mean in bed? Heard the fun phrase: "Butch on the streets, femme in the sheets"? Or vice versa. Does presentation always translate into action? From tenured queer women, and I will count myself among them, there would be an audible laugh and a resounding "No!"

And that's where it can all get confusing...and wonderful. I think this is where that misinterpretation of butch/femme as male/female really plays out. Isn't the butch supposed to be the sexually assertive one? Yes, and then again, No. Yes, if that is what happens in a particular instance, but femme women don't have to feel constrained by some "good girl" social order. If we were so determined to be "good girls" we wouldn't be able to acknowledge that we are queer. In queer women's culture, I think femme women can express their sexual desire and availability without feeling that it will be taken as an indication that they are a slut or can be taken advantage of; something that I think still plays out in straight culture for many women.

Women are amazingly diverse. We don't all fit into a strictly interpreted butch or femme corral. Some of us don't even like it when people ask, "What is your type?" because it feels awkward to describe complex human beings as some listing of qualities. But every culture creates its own language and symbols to describe experience and meaning. Butch/femme is part of queer women's culture that continues to provide meaning for many and makes it possible to describe a wide range of rich experiences. ▽



A plethora of bodacious butches and femmes.

Love & Salad

By Mizblooze56

It was a nice summer day. Not too hot and not humid for once; my ankles thanked Mother Nature. As I hobbled along Elm Street, my head began its usual battle "The Diesel" or "Bones"? Back and forth the debating went til I found myself at the counter in the chilled down Diesel Café. A winner was chosen and my feet were notified long before the rest of me.

There she was—the butch of my dreams behind the counter asking if she could help me. Oh, boy, could she!! Stuttering shyly (Me? Shy?) I blurted out, "An avocado salad and could you—"

"I know, you'd like the 9-grain bread substituted, too, right?"

"Umm, yes, how did you know?"

"Not too many biker women come in here with a gazillion tattoos, piercings, and have biker stickers all over their Canadian crutches—you're not hard to forget, hon."

She called me hon! I'm going to fall all over, throw up my hands and let the lesbian goddesses carry me home as they're fanning me to keep me from fainting. "I guess you're right!" I replied grinning ear-to-ear.

"Why don't you sit down and I'll bring it to you when it's ready. Oh, you want ice coffee too, huh?" she asked.

"Yes, please." I croaked back, getting very near to seeing heaven. So, I sat facing Elm Street and people watched as I imagined her and I rolling around on my bed. Clothes being removed as we rolled, kissed, kissed and rolled. Ahh, a fine day it was in my little world. Even if Disc Diggers didn't have that darn Koko Taylor CD I was looking for, I was happy now.

Minutes later, as I attempted to crunch, chew, and swallow neatly, she nearly had me peeing in my pants as she gave me a bit of a scare by coming up behind me and saying, "Everything all right here?"

And with a mouthful of wild greens and avocado I nodded my head up and down, and she disappeared as quickly and quietly as she appeared. Damn, I thought, if only she had joined me, I'd have poured on the charm, laid out my wit before her very eyes—and tomorrow we'd be arguing about where the ceremony would be held. When we were done with that discussion, then we'd fight over whose job it was going to be to empty the litter box. You know how these things go, right?

Oh, well, life of the fantasizing, salad-eating, disabled woman at the Diesel on a sunny summer's afternoon. Truthfully, who could ask for more? ▽



Name that Butch

The first one to correctly identify this local Boston bi in her butch attire and email nellythrustmor@aol.com will win a copy of Hot & Bothered 4: Short Short Fiction on Lesbian Desire.

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On Our Backs

The woman-on-woman sex magazine *On Our Backs* will relaunch as a quarterly in spring 2005. Don't let their new tagline of "Adventures in Lesbian Sex" put you off. Bi women have always been readers of (and contributors to) *On Our Backs*, and we can hope the editorial pages will be more inclusive than the subtitle. With color photography and new departments, the new *On Our Backs* is touting its identity as the first and only cutting-edge magazine about lesbian sexuality. New to the magazine will be a color nude centerfold, several new features (including high-quality fiction), pictorials from the magazines archives, and an expanded advice section by well-known experts. The spring issue is themed "Sex and the Single Girl," and the cover story will feature Sirius radio's outspoken shock-jock Romaine Patterson. Visit *On Our Backs* at www.onourbacks.com.

GLBT Dance Classes

Swing/Lindy: Sundays through March 20, 6-7 p.m. You'll love learning swing, the dance that's guaranteed to banish the winter blues. If you love rock and roll, blues, big band, hip hop or country, swing dancing has it all and more! Learn it now and you'll do it forever. No experience or partner necessary.

Country Two-Step Intensive: Sundays through March 20, 7 p.m. Two-step is smooth swing that flies; you don't even have to be a country music lover to love country western two-step. The class will move quickly through the basics to get you soaring around the dance floor in no time. No experience or partner necessary.

West Coast Swing Level Two: Sundays through March 20, 8 p.m. Heat up your West Coast Swing with a whole new bag of tricks this winter! If you're comfortable with the basics you're ready to take it to a whole new level. No experience or partner necessary.

Visit www.outtodance.com or contact Liz Nania at 617-363-0029 or email liz@outtodance.com

Butch & FEMME



Editor's Note: As I was going through some very old files of BBWN's, I happened upon some vintage cartoons by Alison Bechdel that she had given permission to use. Alison, I know you still read the newsletter. Hope it's OK we took you up on reprinting this one 10 years later!! Thanks.

Book Review

Brazen Femme: Queering Femininity, edited by Chloe Brushwood Rose and Anna Camilleri, Arsenal Pulp Press, 2003.

Reviewed by Ellyn Ruthstrom

If you enjoy reading about butch/femme identify, *Brazen Femme* is a fascinating book to add to your collection. Published by Canadian publisher Arsenal Pulp Press, the book uses the varied styles of essays, poetry, photography, and cartoons to explore "multiple exposures of femme experience." The editors revel in the diverse perspectives offered and confess that "The voices reflected in this book are both contradictory and in chorus." So post-modern, but also very true.

When I first read the book in 2003, it was one of the first mentions I had seen of "stone femmes." In her piece, "Cut From the Same Stone," Anna Camilleri not only creates an amazing ode to her mother, she traces her path to her identity as a stone femme. At around age twenty-four, she realizes she had become "a femme who could not bear the weight of her own heart—a heart sunk as stone, silt cradled at the bottom of a lake." Her mother passed on a directive to take care of herself financially, but Anna knows it extends much further to being ready to always take care of herself emotionally as well.

Kathryn Payne's "Whores and Bitches Who Sleep With Women" is one of my favorite essays in the book. She weaves two voices into one essay, side by side. On the left her fairly academic, but still very accessible, voice analyzes sex, desire, femmes, whores (or as she says hos), and sex work, with some very interesting insights. On the right, she shares her personal experience with being an academic who chooses to support herself on sex work while looking for her first teaching job. The doublevision is an effective way for Payne to share the contradictions and paradoxes she experiences in her own life.

There is a lot of great writing here, including works by femme icons Amber Hollibaugh and Michelle Tea. Don't think femmes as in high heels and lipstick, though there are mentions of these. Think stark, honest descriptions of desire, passion, and claiming space. Think challenges to racism, fat oppression, classism, and concocting new ways to see femme and feminism. ▼

Restoring the Spirit After the Election

By Anne Hurley

I feel the grief and outrage pile up. Most of the time, I'm numb, and go about business as usual, as a defense against hopelessness. I listen to the news, on independent media, PBS, network TV. Sometimes I can't stand it anymore and listen to music instead. Because I listen to independent media, I sometimes feel I live in a different world from most of the people I associate with. Sometimes I wonder if I'm focusing too much on what's wrong in my government, country, and world.

What do I do that's positive? I have several bumper stickers on my car. I have "CELEBRATE DIVERSITY" with a bright rainbow background. In the center is: "CREATE PEACE," and next to that is: "ONE PEOPLE ONE PLANET, ONE FUTURE," "GODDE BLESS THE WHOLE WORLD." The spelling I took from my friend, John Dunne-Brady, who explained, "It's halfway between God and Goddess." I created it by buying two stickers and cutting and pasting. My thinking is this is an alternative to the "GOD BLESS THE USA" which I see so often on cars, and which to me speaks of a narrow-minded and exclusionary attitude. This is something I can do that requires minimal time and energy. My hope is that it will give encouragement to those of like mind and something to think about to those of open mind.

Also, the car I drive is a gas-electric hybrid. With this I intend to give the message, "I'm willing to take the first step toward weaning myself from dependence on petro-

leum." I honor people who make the principled choice not to own a car at all.

Also, I encourage as many people as I can to listen to independent media. In the Boston area we can get "Democracy Now" every weekday. Is it biased? Is network news biased? Listen to both over a period of time and make up your own mind. Mostly, I think it supplies the news and viewpoints we don't hear on more established news channels. Yes, during what would be a commercial break on commercial news, we might hear, for example, Bob Dylan singing "Masters of War."

One commercial in place of another. Helps restore a little balance, I think. And a little sanity. I also encourage people to become more media savvy. Pay attention to rhetoric, spin, assumptions, and omissions on all news channels; listen, watch, and read broadly. I'm writing this short article, offering these thoughts, as a way of struggling out of my own despair and numbness. For me, it's important to remember, also, to do what restores my spirit, helps me keep balance—walk in the woods, meditate, listen to music. ▽

Hurts from page 1

I have to side with the guys on this one. Women are truly a mystery to me. Men are simple. If I want a guy, I know plenty of ways to make it gracefully obvious. No art of subtlety required. And besides, they usually beat me to the task. Call it the hunter/gatherer instinct.

Maybe it's just a matter of experience. I've been learning how to flirt with boys ever since that day in 2nd grade that Zach came up to me at the drinking fountain and kissed me on the cheek before he ran away. Plus, I had the help of every fashion magazine telling me the top 10 tricks to catch a man. Even once I refused to buy into these commercially driven scams, the culture is ubiquitous.

I have no reference point for the ladies. I feel like a sweaty-palmed pubescent boy at his first after-school dance. I've stumbled into my relationships with women employing radical techniques such as external intervention and kamikaze-style confession.

True, I have the privilege of invisibility. But just try finding romance while wearing an invisibility cloak. ▽

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The Butch/Femme Bookshelf

Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold, edited by E. Kennedy & M. Davis, Viking Penguin, 1994.

An account of the growth of the lesbian community in Buffalo, New York from the mid-1930s to the early 1960s. The first comprehensive history of a working-class butch-femme community.

Butch/Femme, by M. G. Soares, with Judy Grahn and Nisa Donnelly, Crown Publishing, 1995.

A collection of articles celebrating butches and femmes.

Dagger: On Butch Women, by Lily Burana, Roxxie, and Linnea Due, Cleis Press, 1994.

Photos, poems, stories, accounts, essays, and interviews with and/or about butches and femmes.

The Femme Mystique, by Leslea Newman, Alyson Publications, 1995.

Explores aspects of life along the femme continuum from casual femme to high femme.

The Lesbian Erotic Dance, by Joann Loulan and Sherry Thomas, Spinster Ink, 1991.

With a subtitle of "Butch, Femme, Androgyny and Other Rhythms," this book highlights butch/femme roles and lesbian desire.

The Butch/Femme Bookshelf

The Little Butch Book, by Leslea Newman, New Victoria, 1998.

The author of the *Femme Mystique* explores butch issues.

Persistent Desire: a Butch-Femme Reader, edited by Joan Nestle, Alyson Publications, 1992.

This anthology of stories, poems, and nonfiction describes femme and butch lives and relationships over the course of four decades.

S/HE by Minnie Bruce Pratt, Firebrand, 1995.

A fabulously sensual and sexual memoir by Pratt which shares her perspective as a femme-identified lesbian and describes with great emotion how butch/femme energy feels in daily life.

Stonebutch Blues by Leslie Feinberg, Firebrand, 1993.

Feinberg's first novel follows the coming of age of a transgendered, working-class butch who at one point transitions into a man.

Illinois Passes Trans Inclusive Anti-Discrimination Bill

On January 12, the Illinois House of Representatives passed a bill banning discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons. When signed into law by Governor Rod R. Blagojevich, Illinois will become the 15th state to protect gay, lesbian, and bisexual people from discrimination, and the 5th state to protect transgender persons.

"We salute Equality Illinois and its tireless leader, Rick Garcia, for today's extraordinary achievement," said Matt Foreman, Executive Director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. "This win again shows that dogged work by state and local leaders and activists can surmount enormous odds—and is real salve to a community still hurting from the results of November 2."

The law will add "sexual orientation" to the state's existing nondiscrimination statute which already bans discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations or credit on the basis of race, religion, ethnicity, gender, age, disability, marital status and military status. The definition of "sexual orientation" includes

provisions to specifically cover transgender persons. A non-discrimination bill first passed the state House in 1993,

"The passage of this bill is a major advancement for transgender people, both in Illinois and countrywide," continued Foreman. "Once again, a state has proven that when we dare to dream to protect our entire LGBT community with one bill to cover everyone, legislators respond. The activists in Illinois have done a tremendous job."

Illinois becomes the fifth state to pass explicit transgender-inclusive language in its discrimination law, joining California, Minnesota, New Mexico, and Rhode Island. In addition, 72 cities and counties have transgender-inclusive non-discrimination laws on the books. With the addition of Illinois, 27% of the U.S. population now lives in a jurisdiction with transgender discrimination protection. Eight states have enacted transgender-inclusive hate crime laws.

In addition ten states ban anti-gay discrimination—Wisconsin, Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Hawaii, New Jersey, Vermont, New Hampshire, Nevada, Maryland, and New York. ▽

Women's Organizations Rebuilding After Tsunami

Many of you have probably already made donations to organizations to help with the aftereffects of the tsunami in Asia. If you've also been looking for organizations that specifically work with women in those areas, here are three suggested groups.

MADRE is an international women's human rights organization that works in partnership with community-based groups in conflict areas worldwide. MADRE is partnering with INFORM, a human rights organization based in Sri Lanka and is working in the region with women's networks on women-specific issues. They are also working separately on other issues that have to do with participation of all affected communities, including women, in decisions regarding

resettlement and reconstruction and ensuring that land allocation for resettlement is done without prejudice or discrimination. See more at www.madre.org.

The International Planned Parenthood Federa-

tion (IPPF) is committed to promoting the right of women and men to decide family size and the right to the highest possible level of sexual and reproductive health. To ensure that everyone has access to quality, affordable reproductive health care, IPPF provides services—from contraceptive counseling and supplies to HIV prevention, testing and treatment—to the neediest people in the region. Roughly 50,000 women will give birth in the tsunami-affected areas in the next three months. IPPF will be working on establishing safe and healthy environments for those children to be born. For more info, visit www.ippf.org.

The Global Fund for Women, an international network of women and men committed to a world of equality and social justice, advocates for and defends women's human rights by making grants to support women's groups around the world. The Global Fund is committed to supporting the long-term reconstruction of women's rights organizations affected by the disaster and will be making emergency grants to groups in South and Southeast Asia who are dealing with the disaster at the local level. Visit their website at www.Globalfundforwomen.org. ▽

Visit BBWN online at:
biresource.org/bbwn
for a calendar listing of
local bisexual events.

CALENDAR *continued from page 12*

Call Annie at 781-646-2379 or email at kalamari@juno.com for directions.

March 8 ♦ Tuesday

Married But Not Straight Women's Discussion Group, 7:30-9 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge. See February 8th.

March 9 ♦ Wednesday

Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting, 7-9 p.m. All bi community members welcome. See February 9th.

Boundless Presents "Bisexuality, Strength, and Courage" at Fenway Community Health. We've all heard the negative stereotypes and misperceptions about being bisexual, but we don't often highlight the strengths and courageousness of being bi. Join local bi activist Robyn Ochs to explore the unique qualities that bi people have. What are the gifts that the bi community can share with the greater society? What supports do bisexuals need? What resources exist within the bi community already? Come to a free energizing discussion to share, learn, meet others, and celebrate. This event is primarily focusing on the issues that bi/pansexual women face, but people of all genders and orientations are invited to attend. Space is limited. For information or to RSVP, contact Julie at 617-927-6369 or jebin@fenwayhealth.org. Sponsored by Fenway Community Health and the Bisexual Resource Center.

Boston Queer Poly Women's Discussion Group, 7-8:45 p.m. at the Diesel Cafe. See February 9th.

March 10 ♦ Thursday

Under Her Skin: How Girls Experience Race in America, 7:00 p.m. A reading by the editor Pooja Makhijani and contributors to the collection. At the Center for New Words, 186 Hampshire St., Cambridge. For more info, see www.centerfornewwords.org.

March 13 ♦ Sunday

Bisexual Resource Center's 6th Annual Winter House Party, 2-5 p.m. at 34 Albion Street in Somerville. All are invited. Hors d'oeuvres and beverages will be served. Come schmooze with a bunch of bi-friendly folks and make a donation to the Bisexual Resource Center, which provides support for bi people and bi issues around the world and especially in the Boston area. Our Community Service Award will be presented. Optional RSVP, or for directions, e-mail houseparty@biresource.org. \$40 suggested contribution.

March 15 ♦ Tuesday

Bi Rap at the Women's Center, 7:30-9:00 p.m. The topic is: "People's Reactions to Bisexuality? Confusion?" See February 1st.

March 17 ♦ Thursday

Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-9 p.m. See February 2nd.

March 18 ♦ Friday

BiWomen Submissions Deadline. This issue's theme is "Heavy Petting: Bis and Our Pets." See page 2 for more ideas. Send submissions to: *BiWomen*, P.O. Box 400639, Cambridge, MA, 02140 or e-mail to nellythrustmor@aol.com.

March 18 -20 ♦ Friday - Sunday

The Center for New Words presents WAM! 2005: WOMEN & the MEDIA: Taking Our Place in the Public Conversation. WAM! will be held at the Stata Center at MIT in Cambridge, Massachusetts. See sidebar on page 5 for more details.

March 19 ♦ Saturday

Biversity Brunch, 11:30 a.m. Why argue with success? Johnny D's on Holland Street in Davis Square in Somerville always draws the biggest bi brunch crowd. The Davis stop on the Red Line is just across the street.



March 30 ♦ Wednesday
NEW DAY, NEW TIME and NEW LOCATION! *BiWomen* mailing, 7:30-9 p.m. in Somerville. Please contact Katrina at 617-833-3035, or Deb at 781-777-1054 for directions. Join us to label, stuff, and seal! Help BBWN get the newsletter out to women around the country.

Biversity Boston is the mixed gender bisexual Network of Greater Boston.

Ongoing Events

Wednesdays:

Gendertalk, 8:30-9:30 p.m. on WMBR 88.1 FM. Deals with transgender and queer issues.

Women's Club Nights

Saturdays: Dancing at Hollywood KTV, 41 Essex Street, Chinatown T, Boston. 10 p.m.-2 a.m. \$10 cover.

Sundays: Queer night, 9 p.m.-1a.m., the Milky Way, 403 Centre St, Jamaica Plain. DJ and dance floor.



SUBSCRIPTION RATE

for *BiWomen*
(sliding scale)

- ___ \$0-\$20 (pay what you can)
- ___ \$20-\$30 (suggested)
- ___ \$30-\$100 Extra Special Donor
- ___ Renewal
- ___ New Subscriber

BiWomen wants you!!!

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____

BBWN, P.O. BOX 400639, Cambridge, MA 02140

The "Bi Office"

is the Bisexual Resource Center, located at 29 Stanhope Street, behind Club Cafe, right next door to Bertucci's and just down the street from the Hard Rock Cafe. For info call 617-424-9595.

Ongoing Events

1st & 3rd Tuesdays:

Bi Women's Rap. 7:30-9:00 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge. For info and discussion topics call 617-354-8807.

2nd Tuesdays:

Married Bi Women's Discussion Group, 7:30-9:00 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge. Info: 617-354-8807.

First Wednesdays, Third Thursdays:

Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-9 p.m. The group meets at the Bisexual Resource Center at 29 Stanhope St. in Boston. Call 617-424-9595 for info.

CALENDAR

February 1 ♦ Tuesday

Bi Rap at the Women's Center, 7:30-9:00 p.m. A discussion group for bisexual, bi-friendly, and questioning women. Topic: "How does your bisexuality influence your work or career?" Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., 617-354-8807.

February 2 ♦ Wednesday

Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-9 p.m. An informal support group for people who think they may be bisexual or attracted to more than one sex. A small donation is requested to help pay for the space. The group meets at the Bisexual Resource Center at 29 Stanhope St. in Boston. Call 617-424-9595 for info.

February 6 ♦ Sunday

Crafty Day at Sheeri's in Watertown, 1-4 pm, 39 Pearl St. Directions are at www.cs.brandeis.edu/~awfief/hliddEn/directions.html — it's T accessible and plenty of free parking as well. All are welcome to participate or feel free to stand around and see what other people are doing. (For parents, people may be using paints, hot glue guns, and other materials/tools that small children should be kept away from and older children should be warned about.)

February 8 ♦ Tuesday

Married But Not Straight Women's Discussion Group, 7:30-9 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St. A support group for bi and lesbian women who are married or in long-term relationships. Contact Denise at dpp1029@rcn.com for information. Call 617-354-8807 for directions.

February 9 ♦ Wednesday

Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting, 6:30-8:30 p.m. All bi community members are welcome and encouraged to attend. The

meeting is at the Living Center at 29 Stanhope Street in Back Bay.

Boston Queer Poly Women's Discussion Group, 7-8:45 p.m. at the Diesel Cafe, 257 Elm Street in Somerville. Contact dalbino83@excite.com.

February 15 ♦ Tuesday

Bi Rap at the Women's Center, 7:30-9:00 p.m. Topic: "What draws you to men? What attracts you about women?" See February 1st.

February 17 ♦ Thursday

Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-9 p.m. See February 2nd.

February 20 ♦ Sunday

BBWN Brunch at Megan and Carla's in Jamaica Plain, Noon. Please bring a potluck dish and drinks to share. Contact Megan or Carla at 617-522-8819 for directions and to let them know you will be coming.

Biversity Brunch, 1 p.m.

Meet at Christopher's at 1920 Mass Ave. across from the Porter Square T and shopping center. Great brunch food for all. T stop is Porter Square on the Red Line.

February 25 ♦ Friday

New Voices Open Mic, 7:30 p.m. Open mic format and a supportive audience for women and their allies at the Center for New Words at 186 Hampshire St., Cambridge. Poetry and prose welcome. 5- and 10-minute slots available. 7:15 sign-up, 7:30 start. \$5 at the door. For more info, contact 617-876-5310, www.centerfornewwords.org.

March 1 ♦ Tuesday

Bi Rap at the Women's Center, 7:30-9:00 p.m. Topic: "Have you gone out with a woman and wondered if it was date? Are we dating yet?" See February 1st.

March 2 ♦ Wednesday

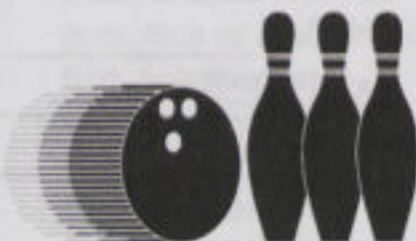
Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-9 p.m. See February 2nd.

March 6 ♦ Sunday

BBWN Potluck Brunch, 11:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Storytelling brunch at Annie's in Arlington. Bring a potluck dish or drinks to share. Annie will be sharing one of her stories for us to enjoy.



Do you like to bowl? Want to be on a BBWN bowling e-mail list? It's sometimes hard to schedule a good weekend for bowling weeks, even months, in advance. Send Ellyn your name and email address at nellythrustmor@aol.com and we'll make a list of people who can be contacted spontaneously to see if they would like to go bowling.



CALENDAR continues on page 11

Heavy Petting: Bis and Our Pets

The Little Furry Lives That Touch Ours

By Ellyn Ruthstrom

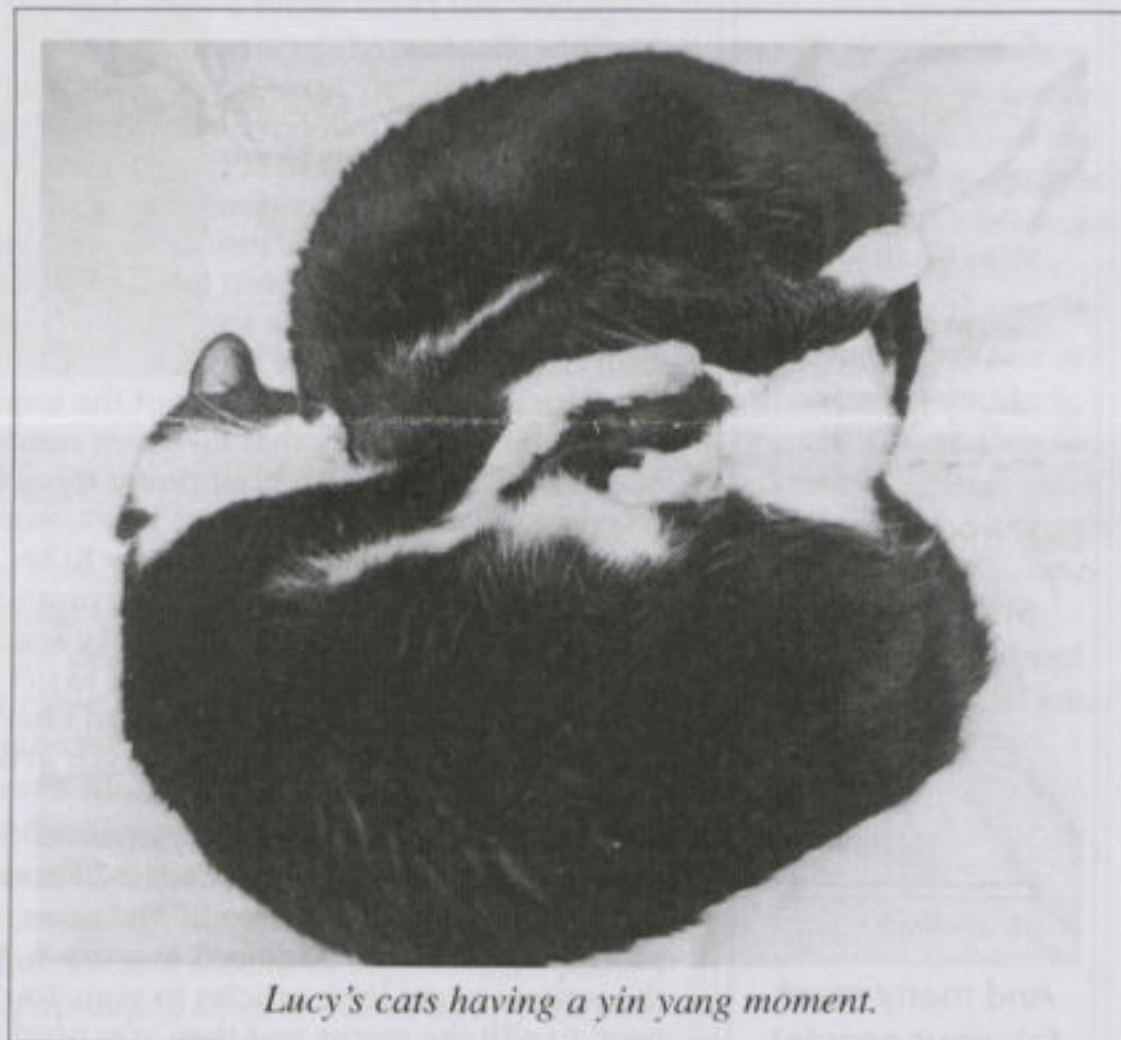
My first cat was Dorothy. She was a gorgeous fluffy brown and black Burmese. I called her the "Queen of the Cats" because she had an orange spot on her forehead that looked like a tiara. I remember her as a fuzzy, cuddly thing that was MY cat and always had to have her in bed with me before I'd fall asleep. My first dog was Bridget, a black lab/beagle mix with such an upbeat kind of spirit. Bridget loved to play and run, and she and Dorothy would sleep peacefully beside each other during the day on the living room couch.

Dorothy had to be put down when I was about 11. She couldn't control herself any more, and even though she peed in the bathtub and not on the floors, my mother decided she was going downhill too fast and put her to sleep. Bridget was with us a few more years, into my high school years, but she too finally couldn't jump up onto any of the comfortable beds and couldn't get up and down the stairs that led into the house.

After Dorothy, I had another cat called Chutzpah and when I was about 15 she decided to give birth on my bed. I tried to set her up with blankets in the bathtub or the closet, but she was determined to labor where she always slept, right beside me. So sometime around 3:00 a.m. Chutzpah gave birth to her one little kitten. It was a difficult birth and I tried to soothe her through it best I could. I was very sad that I couldn't take her to college with me and she died while I was away.

My ex-husband was allergic to cats, dogs, horses, and camels (this actually did come into play when we traveled to India and couldn't do the desert camel trek). Despite his allergy, soon after meeting him we shared a cat with another couple. Her name was Pushkin and she was a sleek all-black cat that would stride around the place with a lot of alertness and warmth. She decided that it was better for her to go back and forth between the two apartments, which were about 50 yards apart from each other on the same street, spreading her personality around and getting double the treats.

Furry continues on page 5



Lucy's cats having a yin yang moment.

How I Feel About My Cats

By Lucy Lizard

I enjoy touching another being very much. Touching another person or even an animal is a kind of spiritual, magical, healing experience for me. It makes me feel connected to another living consciousness (and yes, I believe animals are conscious). In this society, there is often very little touch, even among friends.

Last year I had a lover. I got used to frequent affectionate touching: oh, I love that! When my lover and I broke up, there were many difficult emotions and adjustments to make. Among all the issues I had to deal with, one thing I missed was the sudden lack of the frequent loving touch that I had "gotten used to." Because we stopped seeing each other unexpectedly (is it ever expected?), the lack of touch was a shock to the system.

This is where the cats come in. Not that they had gone anywhere (though I was

Cats continues on page 8

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

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Volunteers of the Month

Gail Zacharias

Robyn Ochs

Deb Morley

Wayne Bryant

Katrina Poehler

Gina

Deb Block-Schwenk

Steph Miserlis

Melissa Kulig

And many more
fabulous people!
You know who
you are!

BiWomen is published bi-monthly.

Editor:

Ellyn Ruthstrom

Sidebar Editor:

Deb Morley

Printed on
recycled paper

The Boston Bisexual Women's Network is a feminist, not-for-profit collective organization whose purpose is to bring women together for support and validation. It is meant to be a safe environment in which women of all sexual self-identities, class backgrounds, racial, ethnic and religious groups, ages, abilities and disabilities are welcome. Through the vehicles of discussion, support, education, outreach, political action and social groups related to bisexuality, we are committed to the goals of full acceptance as bisexuals within the gay and lesbian community, and to full acceptance of bisexuality and the liberation of all gay people within the larger society.

Wanna Be the Next Editor?

Time really just flies on by, doesn't it? As it turns out, I've been editing the newsletter for over seven years. And this issue is the first time that I haven't been able to put the newsletter out on time. I apologize for the delay, but it was unavoidable. My full-time job is editing a national magazine and I was under a very strict deadline. Because of the intense overwork on that publication, my arms began to ache and I knew that I would not have been able to sit down to the computer to keep *BiWomen* on deadline without tremendous pain. And though the pain is a little more manageable this week, I think that I need to make some personal changes to make sure the newsletter itself doesn't suffer in the future.

This is my way of putting out the word in the Boston community that *BiWomen* needs a new editor. I have had a blast doing this job for seven years and have met some great people while doing it. It's a wonderful way to be aware of what is going on in the bi community at large and in the Boston community specifically. (It also makes for a good front to get someone's contact information: "Can I have your e-mail so I can follow up on your article idea?")

What does being the editor involve? Six times a year you need to devote 10-20 hours (depending how easy it is to fill the issue) to producing the issue. You need to work with the writers to get their articles to you. You need to edit the pieces and then you need to lay it out to look pretty. You also need to gather interesting tidbits to put in the sidebars and find graphics that complement the articles. (A toast to Deb Morley who did the sidebars this issue!!)

I know that a lot of things are done virtually these days, and some of you who live in other places may have an interest in this position, but I feel that the editor needs to be in Boston to maintain the flavor of its host community. The best thing you can do if you live in other places is to contribute your writing, we always need interesting content! Please contact me at nellythrustmor@aol.com if you have interest in doing this. I will gladly take time to train the new editor and make it a smooth transition.

Ellyn Ruthstrom

NEXT IN *BiWOMEN*

The *BiWomen* theme for
June/July is:

First Loves

Who do you consider your first love? Do you have a first female love and first male love? Do you think of them differently? Share what happened for you and how it helped shape your sexuality, your identity.

Deadline: May 14, 2005

FUTURE ISSUES

August/September

???????

Send your suggestions for future topics to
nellythrustmor@aol.com

PLEASE SUBMIT TO *BiWOMEN* !

Send articles, calendar entries, letters,
black-and-white art, news, and views to:

BiWomen

P.O. Box 400639

Cambridge, MA 02140

or via e-mail to

NellyThrustmor@aol.com

*If you do not want your name
published, please tell us.*

All articles and art appearing in
this newsletter are copyrighted
by the authors and artists.



It was a great turnout for the February brunch in Jamaica Plain, with a wonderful mix of long-term members and brand new faces. See the calendar for upcoming brunches.

Brunch Coordinator Wants You to Host!

BBWN potluck brunches are a great way to meet other bi women in the Boston area. We try to hold a brunch in a member's home each month so that people can relax and share food and experiences in a safe space. Deb Morley is the brunch coordinator, so please contact her at debmo345@comcast.net if you are interested in hosting a brunch. Thanks Deb for volunteering! And check out the calendar on pages 11-12 for the brunches and other activities coming up in April and May. Hope you can join us.

BBWN Member Defends PBS Program

Following is the text of a letter that I sent on February 2nd to Margaret Spellings, the new Secretary of Education who, in one of her first acts in office, denounced PBS for spending public money on a cartoon with lesbian characters, saying many parents would not want children exposed to such lifestyles. Spellings requested that PBS refund a federal grant that was used to pay for part of the show, and demanded that PBS remove any links from the Department of Education to the show.

Secretary Spellings,

I was absolutely appalled to learn that you are obstructing the "Sugartime" episode of the PBS series "Postcards from Buster" that was scheduled to air nationally on Feb 2. The Department of Education should NOT be refusing to fund this episode. Your action constitutes blatant censorship and is not at all

what this country should be about. I am offended by your presumption that children and the diverse families they are part of should be screened and censored by the United States government before allowed on our public airways. Many different families are represented in this series, including some I find personally distasteful, but I would never argue for censorship. They too are part of the fabric of America and should be represented. Same-sex couples pay taxes the same as anyone else—in fact they pay MORE taxes and receive FEWER societal benefits than other couples who are allowed to legally marry. It is perfectly appropriate that these families be represented.

Your actions are extremely insulting and hurtful. Shame on you!

Sincerely,
Robyn Ochs
Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts



Congrats to Megan Jewett and Carla Imperial on celebrating 10 years of being a couple. They told their romantic tale of their first meeting at the February brunch—each was holding an end of the BBWN banner at Pride!

Safe Colleges Conference

For only \$10, attend New England's Largest Collegiate Conference for the LGBT & Ally Community at Tufts University on April 9. The Safe Colleges Conference provides a safe space for LGBT students, faculty, and administrators who do not attend institutions with the same supportive, welcoming atmosphere as Tufts, and empowers them to change their institutions for the better using the tools, information, and connections they gain at the conference. The conference program also makes available academic topics in queer theory that many colleges and universities still do not offer as part of their curricula. For more information, visit ase.tufts.edu/lgbt/safecolleges/default.htm.



deb shares the bed with one woman and three fellows: what a lucky gal!

eli shares badly. long tall cat stretched his full length—where's comfort for deb?

cavanaugh makes eyes at his beloved deborah, all purr when she's here.

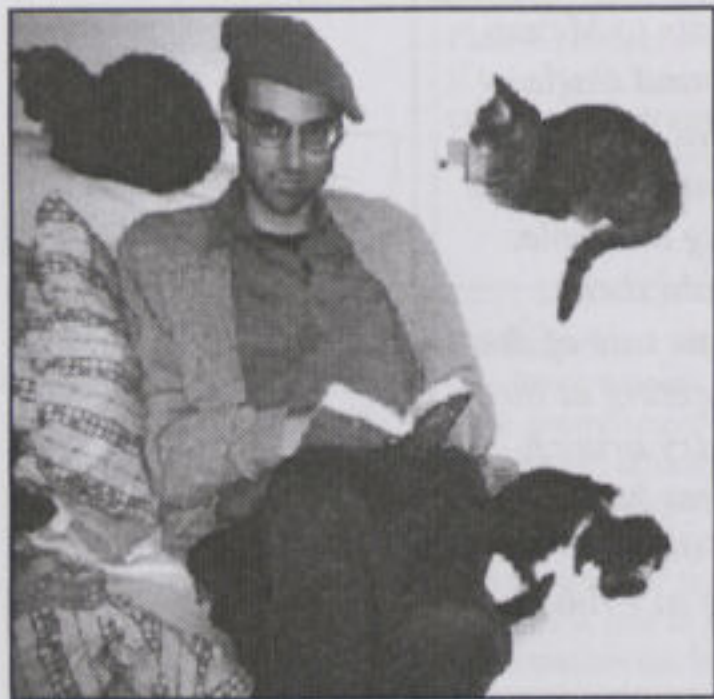
even sweet momo—soft, gentle, and shy with all—has found trust with deb.

—gms, 3/13/05

Bedtime Rituals

By Debbie Block-Schwenk

Kevin and the other three being who share Deb's bed.



I look up from my book at the sound of a demure "meow." Angel is there, looking at me expectantly with her wide green eyes. "Time for bed," she's saying, and she's right. It's about 10:30. (On rainy days she tries to sneak me into bed earlier, and I'm always tempted.)

I brush my teeth and she hovers in the hall, waiting. Then she darts ahead of me into the bedroom. It's not until I've gotten settled under the covers, though, that she comes onto the bed. If I'm lucky I get a couple of gentle snuffles at my cheek or eyes, then she curls up on the other pillow.

A few minutes later,

Daemon, my feisty tabby, scratches at the door, and I get up to let her in. She settles on my chest, purring like a chainsaw, or sometimes crawls under the covers to cuddle. She rarely stays long, but I'm soon asleep, anyway.

I wake up with four other beings in bed with me. A bisexual's dream morning, or what? (At least for some of us.) Unfortunately, though, only one of them is human. Angel's still curled on a pillow, taking up more space than we should really allow a six-pound cat. Daemon's back, too, this morning, flopped down next to my pillow on the very edge of the bed. And Panther has snuck in sometime in the middle of the night; he's curled into a little black ball against my stomach. When I stir, he blinks his yellow eyes sleepily.

In between all the cats, Kevin has found his way into bed, scrunched up next to me—after all, Angel has his pillow. ▼

A Fluff Piece

By Steph Miserlis

I got my pooch in Santa Fe, New Mexico. She's a mutt, a mix between a Border Collie and Australian Shepard, and who knows what else. She's all black with a patch of white under her chin, on her chest. She has very soft, fluffy, shiny fur. She's one of the most consistent and loyal friends I've ever known. I love her and pet her, feed her and walk her.

In return—she provides me with magical companionship, and such a sweet and wonderful perspective on the world. She gives a wide-open ear, with a tilt of the head when I need to talk. She gives me her paw when I cry. She plops down at my feet when I work. She gives me an incredible jump, smile, and bounce when we walk. If I don't have anyone, there she is, wagging her tail, actually the whole back half of her body, happy to see me (or get some biscuits)...same difference to me. She's tactile, and licks, and smells. She maneuvers through places I just 'know' she can't fit. She's so connected to her little body. I can't help but feel more connected to mine just watching her. And I love how she gets such complete joy out of the simplest things, like when she eats her food—she does with such wide-open mouth abandon, munching away. I'll be doing my thing, and sometimes, when I just see her, I feel lighter and happier.



I don't dress her up in bows, or take her with me everywhere, or think about her every minute. But—I am attached. I do miss her when I'm away. I feel such a warm sense of comfort with her, when I feel most alone. I never thought I'd be one of those weird-dog owners who love their dog so much. But I confess...I am. I love my shiny happy dog. More than I ever thought I could. ↘

Furry from page 1

We eventually moved with her to a more rural environment and one day she walked into the forest and didn't come back.

Amazingly, the ex wasn't very allergic to Pushkin, but later, when we got a lovely little tabby kitten named Marley, his allergy flared up. The cat plus the mold in the quaint little English cottage we lived in almost killed him. After that we never had another pet. And, really, this was one reason I knew we weren't meant for the long haul.

My first long-term girlfriend was also allergic to cats and she had a Rottweiler named Daisy. Living with a dog for the first time since childhood was a big adjustment. Cats are so independent. You throw down a handful of food and a bowl of water, clean their litter box every few days and they are fine. With dogs you have to walk them several times a day, (cleaning up their poop all along the way), feed them a few times a day, give them attention throughout the day, and usually groom them in some way. I do think that dogs are worth it,

when you have the time to do all that and still have a life. The relationship didn't last, but I did get occasional Daisy visits.

When I moved to Boston I moved into an apartment with someone who had a beautiful, friendly black cat that reminded me of Pushkin. Unfortunately, she was soon diagnosed with cancer and slowly faded away and died. After that we didn't get another cat and I lived in several apartments over the next few years where I couldn't have animals.

Now I'm living in an apartment where I can have a cat, so Kokopelli came into my life 5 years ago. She is such a social creature; she loves it when my friends come over (especially my allergic ones, of course) and she usually finds her way around to sniff everyone out. Her most unique

Furry continues on page 10

Women Outdoors National Gathering

Be part of an exciting three days of workshops, hiking, climbing, adventure courses, canoeing, entertainment and more in the company of women from throughout the Northeast and beyond! May 27-30 (Memorial Day weekend) in Hancock, NH. 203-238-7440. For more information, see the website at www.women-outdoors.org.



Kokopelli with her two-paw flushing technique.

GLBT Dance Classes

Swing 2: Sundays, April 10-June 12, 6-7 p.m., 8 weeks. If you love to swing and you're eager to expand your repertoire to an exciting new level, this is the place to be! Learn lindy spins, cool new footwork, and more. No partner necessary. Prerequisite: Swing 1 or equivalent.

Country Two-Step Intermediate: Sundays, April 10-June 12, 6-7 p.m., 8 weeks. Add the really fancy stuff to your two-steppin'! If you're comfortable with about 6-8 weeks of basics, join us for a great time in this high-energy class. No partner necessary.

West Coast Swing Level Two: Sundays, April 10-June 12, 8-9 p.m., 8 weeks. If you're comfortable with the basics and beyond, you're ready to take it to a whole new level. Treat yourself to a great night out! No partner necessary. Prerequisite: at least 6 weeks or more of West Coast Swing, or equivalent.

Visit www.outtodance.com or contact Liz Nania at 617-363-0029 or liz@outtodance.com.

What Bisexuals Can Teach the World

By Debbie Block-Schwenk

Editor's Note: This article originally appeared in BiWomen's Dec 1994/Jan 1995 issue. Thanks to Debbie Block-Schwenk for permission to reprint it ten years later. Debbie's words still ring true today.

This past Coming Out Day, I was doing a lot of thinking. What, in addition to contributing to gay and lesbian rights, does coming out do for bisexuals? Of course, we're trying to establish a "bisexual identity" as an acceptable one. But gays and lesbians are a minority of the population; bisexuals may be, too. Can we do anything for the "straight" population? I think we can—I think bisexuals have a lot of important issues and ideas to teach the world. So, I hope these belated Coming Out Day thoughts will inspire all of us to be true to ourselves and help change the world for the better.

My husband teases me that I see a great distinction between "sexuality" and "sex." I do, and I think this is an important concept that probably only bisexuals can teach the world. Much of the literature from the Bi Office emphasizes this point—sexual orientation is not dependent on behavior. You are bi if you are attracted to, or perhaps just deeply interested in, people of both genders. To me, this means that sexuality (which includes sexual orientation) is not dependent on behavior.

This is important because while sex is what one does, sexuality is what one has. Sexuality is a sense of oneself as a sexual and sensual being, comfortable with the idea of sharing pleasure with a willing partner or partners (according to one's own personal values and standards). While sex is an extension of sexuality, a person can have a healthy sense of sexuality and not be having sex. This is an ideal definition—one of the problems with our society is that we so repress sexuality that people see sexuality as meaningful only when they're having sex. I think this is a huge problem with teenagers—having sex is a coming-of-age type ritual because it proves that you have sexuality, i.e. you are an adult. This is an unhealthy attitude towards sex and sexuality—how can you value your sexual partner if the experience is only to prove to yourself and your friends that you are a sexual being. Having to "prove" that you are sexual by doing something is reminiscent of a fraternity initiation where the potential pledges have to prove that they are tough enough—and subservient enough—to make it into the frat.


I'm no expert on school sex education

programs, but the right-wing emphasis on abstinence is still repressing sexuality. It doesn't acknowledge that people are naturally, positively sexual beings, nor that some of them may be mature enough to have meaningful sexual experiences before they are lucky enough to meet a life partner. How do we teach youth—and all people—that sexuality is good, and a man or woman with a healthy, mature sense of his or her own sexuality will be able to make positive and responsible decisions about how and with whom to express that sexuality?

The bisexual movement has a vital role here. By unraveling the myths about bisexual promiscuity and infidelity, we are confronting these same issues of sexuality and behavior. If I choose to stay monogamous with my husband, that does not change my sexuality, only my potential sexual behavior. If we decide on an open marriage and I sleep with lots of women, that doesn't change my sexuality either. More so than the gay and lesbian movement, the bisexual movement is in the crux of this issue because of the gap between the genders and the different "sexual orientations." While a straight married man might fall in love with another woman but never actually have an affair, or a lesbian might engage in non-monogamous relationships, bisexuality is still more illustrative to the average person of the essential difference between sex and sexuality.

If all people had a healthy sense of their sexuality, would people have sex more or less? I don't know, but I hope that young teenagers would have sex less and find some other, less potentially life-shattering rite of passage. Adults would be more aware of their sexual needs, perhaps quicker to seek professional help if things were seriously wrong, and couples who were in love but just not sexually compatible would be able to discuss their options, instead of creating discord by having secretive affairs. A healthy sense of sexuality would not solve all psychological problems, but that layer of self-awareness might make people a little calmer, a little more rational, a little more secure about themselves. That little bit could go a long way.

So the next time you are coming out to someone and have to explain that you are still bisexual even though you're dating a man, or, no, you're not a lesbian just because you're dating a woman, just think what you are contributing in a small way to world peace.

Happy Coming Out! 

Letters From All Over

Dear Ellyn,

Yesterday I got home to find the copies of *BiWomen* you sent. Thank you so much! It's a kind thing to do for a stranger on the other side of the world. I will be sharing the joy by taking them to Bi Adelaide—we've been going a couple of years and have nothing like your newsletter, so others will enjoy reading it a good deal.

Commiserations on the re-election of Bush (or, as one commentator here prefers, Shrub!). Like you, I'd hoped people here would have had enough of Howard, but we've got both of them back. I hope you find/found your way out of the Blues.

Warm regards,
(Couldn't read the signature)

Dear Biversity,

Great news from Maine! Yesterday, Governor John Baldacci signed into law an anti-discrimination bill that will protect the state's LGBT people in housing, education, employment, credit and public accommodations. GLAD Civil Rights Project Director Mary Bonauto, a Maine resident, was there to witness the signing. The law goes into effect on June 29, 2005.

GLAD congratulates Equality Maine for leading this effort and the state's LGBT community on a terrific statewide campaign to make this critical law a reality. GLAD worked closely with our colleagues in Maine to craft strategy, draft the strongest law possible, find and develop witnesses, advance the public discussion, and fight off harmful amendments like those to attach a referendum or remove trans-inclusive language. Visit GLAD's website (www.glad.org) for more information on the law.

But the battle is not over. A group that believes the bill is trying to "normalize something that is not normal" has already begun a petition effort to overturn the law on the November ballot. They have 90 days to gather 50,519 signatures to force a vote by the public. Watch Equality Maine's website (www.equalitymaine.org) to see how you can help Maine's LGBT people keep the rights they have just won.

Thank you for your ongoing support.

Sincerely,
The GLAD team

Dear Readers,

Sister Spirit Incorporated is a 501(c)(3) IRS recognized charity that depends on private donations and grants to keep going. In 1993 in an effort to establish Camp Sister Spirit, (a feminist education and cultural retreat center) we were attacked by the locals because they found out some of us were Lesbian. They held "Town Meetings" trying to drive us out. They shot a dog and hung it on our mailbox placing a sanitary napkin under the dog—a female dog and shot holes in the mailbox.

There was a nuisance lawsuit against us—we won. Barney Frank and Gerald Nadler held an oversight hearing in our case. Janet Reno sent in Community Relations Services to mediate (the other side refused).

We were on *Oprah*, 20/20, *Jerry Springer*, *Larry King Live* and every major newspaper around the world. (Check us out on "google").

We are all unpaid volunteers making available education, information, referral, advocacy and meeting space to address social issues, including but not limited to the following: sexism, racism, homophobia, hunger, family violence, health, anti-Semitism, ageism, ableism, and many more oppressions. We have an emergency food pantry. We have many, many local friends, today but, Mississippi is the poorest state in the nation and we must rely on folks from other places to realize our importance and agree to help. Please send your tax-deductible donation to Camp Sister Spirit, P.O. Box 12, Ovett, MS 39464 (Visa/MC accepted).

Brenda Henson, Ed.S.
Sister Spirit Incorporated



International Conference on Bisexuality

The 9th International Conference on Bisexuality will be hosted by BiNetCanada (groups.yahoo.com/group/binetcanada) and will take place in June 2006 in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. For more information, subscribe to the conference e-mail list by sending a message to 9icb-subscribe@yahoo.com.

Never been to Ptown? Or been many times? Either way...

Single Women's Weekend, May 13-15, Women's Week, October 7-16 in Provincetown, MA. Women's Innkeepers, PO Box 573, Provincetown, MA 02657. www.womeninnkeepers.com

More of Deb Block-Schwenk's feline companions.

Bisexual Resource Center Announces New Book

The Bisexual Resource Center announces the publication of *Getting Bi: Voices of Bisexuals Around the World*. Edited by BBWN members Robyn Ochs and Sara Rowley, the new bi collection includes nearly 200 essays from 32 countries. Topics include coming out, relationships, politics, community, and more. The book also addresses the intersection of bisexuality with race, class, ethnicity, gender identity, disability and national identity. Authors from 32 countries discuss bisexuality from personal perspectives and their own cultural contexts, providing insight into societal views on bisexuality from countries ranging from Colombia to China. *Getting Bi* will be available April 2005 for \$14.95. Order from the Bisexual Resource Center website at www.biresource.org, or send a check or postal order plus any donation (tax-deductible) to: Bisexual Resource Center, P.O. Box 1026, Boston, MA 02117-1026 USA.



"Good Girl" by Melissa Kulig of Medford, Massachusetts. Mixed Media on wood panel. For further information and to view more artwork visit maksimumdesign.com or send an e-mail to maksimum@mindspring.com.

Cats from page 1

often at my lover's house), but I now enjoy going to bed early with a good book and one of my cats curled up with me. I scratch her neck, and making her feel good makes me feel

good. Cats can be the most sensual, hedonistic animals (though not sexual in my book). They are also clever, playful, and creative. With all that, they are entertaining, even while asleep.

I am grateful to have cats that helped me heal from the break-up and get back to normal. ▼



Lucy's Identicats at her window.

Been Around the Block Awhile?

A local freelancer writer is doing a magazine feature on historic women's bars in the Boston area. She's looking for people who know about or might have frequented the bars called Saints (1973-82), Somewhere Else, Vicky's, or Cavanaugh's. If you know of anyone (friends, moms, aunts, exes, etc.) or are a woman who frequented these places, please contact Jeannie Greeley at Jgrls76@aol.com. Also, if you know of other Boston-based women's bars not listed let her know. ▼

Kate Clinton, *The Marrying Kind*, 2004

Reviewed by Ellyn Ruthstrom

Kate Clinton's new comedy CD, *The Marrying Kind*, takes you around the queer political landscape with her usual wry, camp, and hilarious take on things. While she does have quite a number of comic spins on the same-sex marriage issue, thus the title, she also takes on pre-2004 election reality, the Catholic church and its abusive priests, homeland security, and much more. The thing about political comedy is that it changes quickly, depending on what is on the front page each day. But even with that in mind, Clinton's humorous riffs on the political landscape are still gut-wrenching funny months after the events have happened.

One of the ways she keeps these topics fresh is her personalization of the politics. Clinton's long-term partner is activist/writer Urvashi Vaid, and she mines their relationship throughout the CD with great affect. Referring to her girlfriend's idea of a hot date, "Dinner and a demo," she goes on to say that as domestic partners in the state of New York, the most useful benefit is that she can visit her partner in jail.

In one of my favorite lines of the CD, Clinton notes how the same-sex marriage issue is being used as a wedge issue across the country. "We're like the butt thong between the cheek of church and the cheek of state. And if you think that was easy to say you are wrong." And, on the issue of the fall of the sodomy law last year, she nicknames the three conservative Supreme Court justices "the axis of Medieval."

Even when she talks about the reality for comics right after September 11th—a pretty serious topic—she cracked me up with her version of simple non-political comedy. "Celine Dion walks into a bar and the bartender says, 'Why the long face?'"

The only thing that mildly annoyed me is a vocal mannerism that I associate with

"Queer Eye for the Straight Guy." Do you know how several of the gay men on that show, especially Carson, address everyone as "people"? "Come on, people, let's get out of here." Well, Clinton has picked this up and uses it throughout. Maybe it's a New York thing, but when you are listening to something rather than watching it, I think you hear the patterns more distinctly, and it annoyed me.

Definitely listening to a humor CD is very different from a live performance. You miss Clinton's fabulous facial expressions and

physical comedy. You can tell by the response of the audience that you're missing a layer of the humor, but maybe it just gives you a chance to catch your breath from laughing.

I think that if you love Kate Clinton's comedy, you'll love this CD. Never heard her routine before? Get this and be introduced to one of the funniest queer political comics around. Being a progressive political comedienne in a time of repression can't

be easy, and it's good to support the voices that continue to bring attention to a queer humor perspective. ▼



Michigan Womyn's Music Festival

Join thousands of women August 9-14 for the 30th anniversary of the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival! This year's festival includes over 40 performances, hundreds of workshops, a film festival, a crafts fair, and fitness and dance classes. Ferron, Indigo Girls, Toshi Reagon, Tribe 8, Holly Near, Ember Swift, The Butchies, and the Topp Twins (who can yodel like nobody's business) round out the musical performances. For more information, contact WWTMC, P.O. Box 22, Walhalla, MI 49458 or www.michfest.com.

BBWN-Chat: Connecting Online with BBWN

For a number of years, the Boston Bisexual Women's Network (BBWN) has had three email lists (also known as "listservs") to facilitate communication within the Boston-area bi women's community. Due to the small amount of activity on some lists, and the cross-posting of emails on all three, two of the email lists will no longer be used. Please start using bbwn-chat for all postings to include information about events for or of interest to members of the Boston Bisexual Women's Network and other self-identified bi and bi-friendly women in and around the Boston area, communication between self-identified women in the Boston area who would like to help plan, shape, and implement events, programs, actions, and policies of the Boston Bisexual Women's Network, and general discussion between BBWN members.

To subscribe to bbwn-chat, send an e-mail message to: bbwn-chat-request@taxgrrrl.com and include only the word "subscribe" (without the quotes) in the body of the message. We hope to hear from you online!

Equality Forum Celebrates GLBT Rights

Celebrate the 40th anniversary of the GLBT Civil Rights Movement at the Equality Forum, April 25 - May 1, 2005 with 70 programs, parties, and events in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Equality Forum began in 1993 as PrideFest Philadelphia, a non-profit organization that hosted a weekend of programming. In 1999, PrideFest changed its name to PrideFest America and expanded to 7 days. In 2003, the Board renamed the organization to Equality Forum to reflect the inclusion of international programs and an annual Featured Nation. Equality Forum promotes understanding of the impact of homophobia on individuals, families, and society, and advances GLBT equality. The national celebration on May 1st includes performances by Cyndi Lauper and Kate Clinton. For more information see www.equalityforum.com/

Upcoming *In the Life* Programs

This May, the PBS program *In the Life* salutes extraordinary women in the LGBT community who have pushed the boundaries of the larger culture to make life more interesting and sometimes easier for LGBT people. Hosted by Tony Award-winning actress Cherry Jones, the series is called "My Fair Ladies" and spans a wide-range of topics. Check out local PBS station listings to find out specific viewing times in your area.

ODD GIRL OUT: *In the Life* takes a stroll down memory lane with Ann Bannon, whose tawdry pulp novels documented gay life in Greenwich Village in the 1950s and 60s.

RISE ABOVE: There have long been voices that rise above rhetoric, reaching deep into the hearts and souls of people everywhere. One such voice was that of Audre Lorde, acclaimed poet & scholar, feminist, and outspoken voice

of reason. *In the Life* explores how Lorde's work challenged the social prejudice of our culture, leaving a legacy for generations to come.

REAL TO REEL: Filmmaker Deborah Dickson talks about her award-winning film "Ruthie and Connie: Every Room of the House," which chronicles the friendship, romance, and extraordinary journey of two 1950's housewives turned modern-day activist lesbian grandmothers.

BILLIE: Billie Jean King wanted to be a professional athlete, but talent was not enough. The governing political, social, and athletic institutions denied her the opportunities she would have had if she had been a man. Billie Jean rose to the challenge.

OUT TAKES: Finally, Harvey Fierstein reminds us how the LGBT community has responsibilities that are sometimes left unfulfilled.

In the Life is the only national television series by, for, and about the LGBT community. A three-time Emmy Award nominee, *In the Life* blends hard-hitting journalism, lively entertainment reports, and bold commentary for a no-holds-barred look at life within the LGBT community. Against senate protests, the show launched in 1992 and became the country's first regularly scheduled gay-themed program. ▽

Be Visible: Flash Your Bi T-shirt

Laura Brewer in the United Kingdom is launching a new bi project and is looking for help from around the globe. The project is to develop a collection of photos of Bi T-shirts, such as ones from BiCons (national or international bi conferences) or others that people have either bought from conventions, from shops, or made themselves. If you have a T-shirt with a Bi slogan on it, take a clear photo of it and send it to bi_t_shirt@yahoo.co.uk.

The idea of the project is to write a short article, and maybe develop a small website. The idea stems from the notion that bisexuality is often seen as invisible, however the use of button badges, T-shirts, etc. are cheap and practical ways of removing that invisibility and creating a self-identifying statement. ▽

Visit BBWN online at:
biresource.org/bbwn
for a calendar listing of
local bisexual events.

Furry from page 5

talent is that she flushes the toilet. No, I didn't teach her to do it, and no, she doesn't use the toilet before she flushes it. And I have the evidence to prove it. (See the photo on page 5) She uses the two-paw approach. She also loves basketball like I do. She can return the ball with one or both paws and loves running from one end of the house to the other chasing her mini-balls.

All these animals have come through my life. I know it's hard to lose an animal companion—they share our quiet moments, they soothe our sadness and loneliness, and they seem happy when we are happy, too—but it's also kind of sweet that we can get to know so many furry friends in our one life. Each of them has such a unique personality and quirky little habits. They also seem to accept our quiriness, too. And you don't have to come out to your animals, they just accept you unconditionally... as long as you let them watch. ▽

CALENDAR *continued from page 12*

May 3 ♦ Tuesday

Bi Rap at the Women's Center, 7:30-9:00 p.m.
Topic: "Managing relationships: communication, levels of intimacy, staying friends." See April 5th.

May 4 ♦ Wednesday

Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-9 p.m. See April 6th.

Boundless Presents: Our Bodies, Ourselves: A New Edition for a New Era, 7-9 p.m. at the Central Square YWCA, Cambridge. A lot has changed since the health book *Our Bodies, Ourselves* first published the chapter "In Amerika They Call Us Dykes." In celebration of the newest edition, join a panel of OBOS authors and contributors for a look at how OBOS has grown and changed to serve lesbians, bi women, and transpeople. Light food provided. Contact Julie at jebin@fenwayhealth.org or 617-927-6369. Co-sponsored by Fenway Community Health's Boundless program and the Center for New Words.

May 5 ♦ Thursday

Letta Neely reads from her new book, Geographies of Power, 7:00 p.m. At the Center for New Words, 186 Hampshire St., Cambridge. For more info, see www.centerfornewwords.org.

May 12 ♦ Tuesday

Married But Not Straight Women's Discussion Group, 7:30-9 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge. See April 8th.

May 11 ♦ Wednesday

Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting, 7-9 p.m. All bi community members welcome. See April 13th.

Boston Queer Poly Women's Discussion Group, 7-8:45 p.m. at the Diesel Cafe. See April 13th.

May 17 ♦ Tuesday

Bi Rap at the Women's Center, 7:30-9:00 p.m. The topic is: "Looking femme, acting butch?" See April 5th.

May 19 ♦ Thursday

Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-9 p.m. See April 6th.

May 14 ♦ Saturday

BiWomen Submissions Deadline. This issue's theme is "First Loves." See page 2 for more ideas. Send submissions to: *BiWomen*, P.O. Box 400639, Cambridge, MA, 02140 or e-mail to nellythrustmor@aol.com.

May 15 ♦ Sunday

BBWN brunch at Robyn's in Jamaica Plain, noon. Please bring a brunch dish or drinks to

share. It's also Lilac Sunday and those interested can head over to the Arnold Arboretum after the brunch for a stroll together. www.arboretum.harvard.edu/plants/lilac_sunday.html. Contact Robyn at ochs@fas.harvard.edu or 617-413-2717 for directions and to let her know you are coming.

May 21 ♦ Saturday

Saturday Biversity Brunch, 11:30 a.m. Johnny D's on Holland St. in Davis Sq. in Somerville always draws the biggest bi brunch crowd, so we're going again this month. The Davis stop on the Red Line is just across the street.

Youth Pride, noon, at the Parkman Bandstand on the Boston Common. Rally at the bandstand then walk through the streets of Boston supporting queer youth. Leslie Feinberg, trans warrior, will be the featured speaker. A festival will run 2-5 p.m., with Michelle Tea as the emcee and music by Girlyman, The Butchies and more.

May 25 ♦ Wednesday
NEW DAY, NEW TIME and NEW LOCATION! *BiWomen* mailing, 7:30-9 p.m. in Somerville. Please contact Katrina at 617-833-3035, or Deb at 781-777-1054 for directions. Join us to label, stuff, and seal! Help BBWN get the newsletter out to women around the country.

Biversity Boston is the mixed gender bisexual Network of Greater Boston.

Ongoing Events

Wednesdays:

Gendertalk, 8:30-9:30 p.m. on WMBR 88.1 FM. Deals with transgender and queer issues.

Women's Club Nights

Saturdays: Dancing at Hollywood KTV, 41 Essex Street, Chinatown T, Boston. 10 p.m.-2 a.m. \$10 cover.

Sundays: Queer night, 9 p.m.-1a.m., the Milky Way, 403 Centre St, Jamaica Plain. DJ and dance floor.



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ADDRESS _____

BBWN, P.O. BOX 400639, Cambridge, MA 02140

The "Bi Office"

is the Bisexual Resource Center, located at 29 Stanhope Street, behind Club Cafe, right next door to Bertucci's and just down the street from the Hard Rock Cafe. For info call 617-424-9595.

Ongoing Events

1st & 3rd Tuesdays:

Bi Women's Rap, 7:30-9:00 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge. For info and discussion topics call 617-354-8807.

2nd Tuesdays:

Married Bi Women's Discussion Group, 7:30-9:00 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge. Info: 617-354-8807.

First Wednesdays, Third Thursdays:

Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-9 p.m. The group meets at the Bisexual Resource Center at 29 Stanhope St. in Boston. Call 617-424-9595 for info.

CALENDAR

April 5 ♦ Tuesday

Bi Rap at the Women's Center, 7:30-9:00 p.m. A discussion group for bisexual, bi-friendly, and questioning women. Topic: "How do you describe yourself?" Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., 617-354-8807.

April 6 ♦ Wednesday

Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-9 p.m. An informal support group for people who think they may be bisexual or attracted to more than one sex. A small donation is requested to help pay for the space. The group meets at the Bisexual Resource Center at 29 Stanhope St. in Boston. Call 617-424-9595 for info.

April 10 ♦ Sunday

Boston Bi Women's Network Tea Party Brunch, at Hilary's in Malden from 12-3 p.m. Bring a few bags of your favorite tea to share and a brunch dish. T accessible, take the Orange line to Malden center. Call/e-mail Hilary for further directions at 781-420-6018 or htolan@hotmail.com.

April 12 ♦ Tuesday

Married But Not Straight Women's Discussion Group, 7:30-9 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St. A support group for bi and lesbian women who are married or in long-term relationships. Contact Denise at dpp1029@rcn.com for information. Call 617-354-8807 for directions.

April 13 ♦ Wednesday

Boston Queer Poly Women's Discussion Group, 7-9 p.m. Meetings of the 2nd Wednesday Queer Poly Women's Discussion Group are held at the Diesel Cafe, 257 Elm St. in Somerville. T stop is Davis on the Red Line. The group meets to discuss issues relevant to women in the poly community, especially those of interest to queer women. We range

from social chatting to more in-depth discussions, depending on what people want to discuss. If you haven't attended before, please e-mail Donna at dalbino83@yahoo.com so that we can arrange a way to meet up.

April 14 ♦ Thursday

Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting, 6:30-8:30 p.m. All bi community members are welcome and encouraged to attend. The meeting is at the Living Center at 29 Stanhope Street in Back Bay.

Boston Queer Poly Women's Discussion Group, 7-8:45 p.m. at the Diesel Cafe, 257 Elm Street in Somerville. Contact dalbino83@excite.com.

April 17 ♦ Sunday

Sunday Biversity Brunch, 1:00 p.m. Brunch will be at Doyle's at 3484

Washington Street in Jamaica Plain, between the Green Street and Forest Hills stops on the Orange Line. The number at

Doyle's is 617-524-2345. If the weather is nice and people are up for it, we may go for a walk in the Arboretum after brunch.

Bisexual People of Color Gathering, 4-6 p.m. This will be a Sweats And Socks gathering. Wear your most comfortable sweats and your funnest pair of socks for an afternoon of fun, food, socializing, as well as discussing issues that are on your mind relating to the group. Whether you are Asian, Latino, Native American, African American, East Indian, Caribbean, biracial or of mixed heritage, all diverse ethnicities and gender identities are welcome. Please bring a dish or a beverage to share. For information call John at 617-983-8788 or e-mail at bi_naturist2@lycos.com with 'BiPOC' in the subject line."

April 19 ♦ Tuesday

Bi Rap at the Women's Center, 7:30-9:00 p.m. Topic: "Queer relatives: do you have a gay uncle? Or do you feel like you are the only queer person in the family? Come hear about GLBTs in the family." See April 5th.

April 21 ♦ Thursday

Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-9 p.m. See April 6th.



Do you like to bowl? Want to be on a BBWN bowling e-mail list? It's sometimes hard to schedule a good weekend for bowling weeks, even months, in advance. Send Ellyn your name and e-mail address at nellythrustmor@aol.com and we'll make a list of people who can be contacted spontaneously to see if they would like to go bowling.



CALENDAR continues on page 11

First Loves

First Loves, Sexual Identities, and Being Real

By Deb Morley

It seems that a "first love" can really shape how one identifies their sexuality. Just as someone whose first love is of the opposite sex may assume she is heterosexual, I assumed an identity of lesbian after falling in love and becoming lovers with a woman. I was 15.

Despite the fact that I had had crushes and sexual desires for boys and girls, men and women, I embraced my lesbian identity and experienced a sense of belonging that I had longed for throughout my upbringing in a family with its share of problems. In high school I found lesbian friends and lesbian community on softball teams and in gay bars. While in college, the world of women's coffeehouses, women's music, and a wonderful friendship with my activist, feminist, lesbian roommate all supported my lesbian identity. However, I continued to have crushes and sexual desires for both men and women. This is not something I ever spoke of to anyone.

In hindsight, I see that repressing my desire for both men and women led me to behaving in some harmful ways as I secretly sought out sexual experimentation with men. Even after having been sexual with both men and women, I held tightly to my lesbian identity. How could this identify that felt like such a homecoming to me at age 15 be wrong? Was I really straight and just denying it? Sadly, I experienced much of this turmoil and acting out during an 8-year "monogamous" relationship with a woman. Due to my dishonesty and cheating, I realized that it would be impossible for her to ever feel safe with me if I ever swayed from identifying as anything other than 100% lesbian. Understandably, I had broken her trust. We ended our relationship.

During the year after our breakup, I felt myself transforming in various ways. At age 32, I was completing a master's degree that was going to open up new career paths for me, I lost 50 pounds through Weight Watchers, and I began to feel close to a man that I worked with. He was liberal, intelligent, kind and thoughtful. I was touched by his devotion to his 7-year-old daughter who he had

First continues on page 7



Pictures of You

By Jennifer Williams

I met my first love in high school during the late eighties and I hated her. She came to our school a year behind the rest of us, having just moved from Cape Cod and carrying a sexier than though attitude. I thought she was stuck up and not worth my time. But with her long red hair, arched eyebrows and Gothic sensibility I should have known I would fall for her.

Her name was Tara, like the Green Goddess, and indeed she was a Goddess. She had already been to clubs and shows, meddled in pill popping and smoked Camel cigarettes. It wasn't long before she found herself inexorably entwined with our crowd of Punks, Goths, and artist types. Many afternoons were spent applying spider web makeup to our eyes, listening to Tribe, Bauhaus, and The Cure, and riding the subways in Boston with no particular destination in mind.

Everyone fell in love with Tara. She was beautiful and sexy, a talented writer and dancer, and the world's biggest dreamer. She had this wonderfully poetic way of looking at the world and the people in it. I soon found myself having butterflies in my stomach when I was with her and thinking about her constantly when I wasn't. I didn't know what to do as I had never had feelings like this before and I was afraid with her

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Volunteers of the Month

Gail Zacharias

Robyn Ochs

Deb Morley

Wayne Bryant

Katrina Poehler

Jennifer Williams

Melinda Brown

Marcia Diehl

Mizblooze56

Michelle Polischuk

Stephanie B.

Sheeri Kritzer

And many more
fabulous people!
You know who
you are!

BiWomen is published bi-monthly.

Editor:

Ellyn Ruthstrom

Printed on
recycled paper

The Boston Bisexual Women's Network is a feminist, not-for-profit collective organization whose purpose is to bring women together for support and validation. It is meant to be a safe environment in which women of all sexual self-identities, class backgrounds, racial, ethnic and religious groups, ages, abilities and disabilities are welcome. Through the vehicles of discussion, support, education, outreach, political action and social groups related to bisexuality, we are committed to the goals of full acceptance as bisexuals within the gay and lesbian community, and to full acceptance of bisexuality and the liberation of all gay people within the larger society.

Why Do You Read BiWomen?

Hope you enjoy this issue. I think it's got quite a fine selection of different "first love" experiences in it. I was surprised that everyone interpreted first love as the love of other people; I had half-expected something about loving to play the piano or climbing trees or something else from the early years. I love how some people had a first female love and some had a first male love. And don't miss Deb Morley's front page piece about how that first love can be so important to one's sexual identity, yet not always the truest answer.

The writers really shared some very tender, vulnerable moments from their pasts, both in poetry and prose. A big thanks to all the contributors for this issue, including a few new writers!! Hope you'll write for *BiWomen* again.

As I announced in the last issue of the newsletter, BBWN is looking for a new editor for this lovely publication. No one has come forward, as of yet, so one of the things we are going to do is make the newsletter a quarterly right now. This issue is now for June, July, and August. The next one will be September, October, and November. And that will be my last issue editing the newsletter.

But until then, I'd like to ask a favor of you, the readers of the newsletter. Could you take a few minutes and write down what *BiWomen* has meant to you over the years. Even if you read this newsletter at a college or GLBT center and don't get an individual copy. Do you look forward to reading *BiWomen*? What do you get out of it? We send this out to several different countries around the world, too. If you are reading this in Australia or Canada or The Netherlands, what makes you want to read *BiWomen*? Send me along your thoughts so that we can share those sentiments with other readers. As always, you can e-mail me at nellythrustmor@aol.com. I'm anxious to hear what you have to say. Thanks.

Ellyn Ruthstrom

NEXT IN *BiWOMEN*

The *BiWomen* theme for September/October/November is:

Envisioning a New World

Ever try to imagine what a better world would be like? What, in your mind, would make it better? What needs to change? How can we get there? Take this in whatever direction you want to. Share your dreams and visions.

Deadline: August 19, 2005

Send your suggestions for future topics to
nellythrustmor@aol.com

PLEASE SUBMIT TO *BiWOMEN* !

Send articles, calendar entries, letters, black-and-white art, news, and views to:

BiWomen

P.O. Box 400639

Cambridge, MA 02140

or via e-mail to

NellyThrustmor@aol.com

If you do not want your name published, please tell us.

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Being Proud at Pride

In recent years, many organizations that have supported the rights of gays & lesbians have added the B&T at the end of the GL to indicate their inclusion of bisexuals and transsexuals. While I appreciate the thought of inclusion, I still often find the focus of these groups on the G and the L, and less, if at all, on the B and the T. I am still filled with emotion when I read my friend, Melinda Brown's speech that so tastefully acknowledges our presence in these communities, whether or not named. She gave this speech in 1994 at the North Carolina Lesbian & Gay Pride rally. She was the "bisexual community representative."

—Deb Morley

This may be the first time a representative of the bisexual community has been invited to speak at North Carolina Pride, but it is not the first time we have participated in this celebration, and it will certainly not be our last.

Who are bisexuals? We are people aware of our capacity to be sexually and/or emotionally attracted to both women and men. When you see us in public with our partners and friends, you may think we are lesbian, gay, or straight, but what we are..... is bisexual.

We joyfully acknowledge our diversity in sexual expression whether it be polyamorous or monogamous or celibate or any other way people can be, but just like lesbians and gay men, we refuse to be defined solely in sexual terms.

We are bisexual.

We are not confused, this is not a phase, and there is no fence!

Historically, bisexuals have been a part of the lesbian and gay rights movement from the beginning. It doesn't matter whether or not the word bisexual appears in the title of an organization or a march. We will be there, because we are committed to our work in the bisexual, lesbian, gay, and transgender communities.

Many bisexuals are visible as leaders and active members of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender groups across North Carolina. As more organizations become bisexual friendly, you will most likely find that we are already there.

Those of us who have participated this weekend are proud to be bisexual, and we are just as proud to be queer, yet we also recognize that we are here for all the people in gay, lesbian, and straight communities who do not feel safe enough to claim their bisexual identities.

And we ask that you remember that the only way for all of us to achieve our rights, is to come together as a diverse community working toward the day when none of us lose our children, our families of origin or choice, our jobs, or our lives, because of our sexual identities. ▽

Brunch Coordinator Wants You to Host!

BBWN potluck brunches are a great way to meet other bi women in the Boston area. We try to hold a brunch in a member's home each month so that people can relax and share food and experiences in a safe space. Deb Morley is the brunch coordinator, so please contact her at debmo345@comcast.net if you are interested in hosting a brunch. Thanks Deb for volunteering! And check out the calendar on pages 11-12 for the brunches and other activities coming up in June, July, and August. Hope you can join us.



It was tea time at the April Brunch at Hilary's in Malden. A great group showed up and swapped stories about their favorite teas. As usual, the food was tasty and the laughs were plentiful. Don't miss the Pre-Pride Brunch in June and the summer brunches at members' homes in July and August!



Call for Entries

The 11th Annual Northampton Independent Film Festival is now accepting shorts and full length films and videos. Categories include: narrative, documentary, gay, lesbian, animation, foreign, and student works. Over \$7000 in prizes last year! Entry deadline is July 31, 2005. For submissions and application information visit www.niff.org or e-mail: director@niff.org.

THANKS THIS MONTH TO THE GENEROUS BOOK GIVERS BELOW:

Annie Goglia

"It Depends On What the Definition of 'Sex' Is": A True Story from 1977

By Marcia Deihl

A little cowboy belt. That's all it was. Some kids' belt from Woolworth's, with red and green neon plastic jewels set in black-painted cardboard. Nice fake silver buckle . . . Ah, if this little belt could talk . . . Well, I suppose I could talk for it. This is its story.

I don't know what people mean when they say the seventies was about disco and leisure suits. The seventies was about sex. They say if you remember the sixties, you weren't there. I have diaries for every day of my life since 1963, so I don't have that excuse. The pages say not only that I *was* there, but what I did and who I did. Now that I know what being here feels like, I can say without compunction, that even though I was there, I was not really *there*.

I was 27 in '77. I'd recently moved out of my anarchist collective, where my first lover, Sex Should Be Like Shaking Hands (SSBLSH), and his former woman lover, Disciple of Wilhelm Reich (DWR), still lived, along with Disciple of Wilhelm Reich's former former lover, Stinky Beard Crumbs (SBC). DWR was the first woman I met who slept happily with both women and men, often within the same week.

My new roommate, Mandolin Picking Girl (MPG), had once had an affair with SSBLSH, but she now she was involved with Fiddle Playing Boy (FPB). FPB was separated from his wife, Nothing is Appropriate (NIA).

When DWR fell in love with FPB, she won him away from MPG. MPG was miffed, but she went on with her life. One night, she invited her former lover and good friend, SSBLSH, over for dinner. When I left the collective, I had lifted SSBLSH's cowboy belt for a souvenir. It was not really one belt; but two funky little kid cowboy belts buckled together, with an outsized fake silver buckle that was light as paper. All my friends thought it was cool. It was the least I deserved. After asking me to move in to the collective, SSBLSH didn't sleep with me again, saying that we'd get too dependent on each other since we were now living in the same house. (Didn't he know that he had been my first? What nerve! But how would he know; I'd had a college boyfriend for five years, a lovely magical man. But much as we tried, we never "did it," if by "it" you mean intercourse. He finally admitted he was gay, of course, the first of my queer lovers.

By the time that dinner arrived, I had almost forgotten that the belt was once SSBLSH's belt. I had loaned it to my guitar teacher, NIA. When SSBLSH came over for dinner, NIA passed him on the staircase as she was leaving, wearing the belt. He may have glanced at it, but he didn't say anything. He probably suspected that DWR had given it to her current lover, FPB, who may well have left it lying around the house, where his former wife NIA had found it and taken it out of spite. She was just as angry at FPB and DWR as MPG was. I had nothing against FPB, as I hardly knew him, and I also liked DWR, since we used to gossip about what a jerk SSBLSH was.

What SSBLSH didn't know was that I had given the belt to NIA because I was in love with her. "Nothing is appropriate," she said to me, climbing into my bedroom window at 4 a.m. after a gig. I had never been with a woman before, and she was heartstopping—a witchy feral cowgirl with long wild black hair.

The group of us made a six-pointed star, two of us having slept with two each of the others, and SSBLSH (who else?) having slept with all the women except NIA.

There seemed to be no reason we couldn't all have slept with each other; it was the national pastime in the underground. We lived in a thick haze of body odor, marijuana, and Raid. We had all run hard from our middle class homes to find freedom, truth, art, and love. We had defeated Nixon, we lived on unemployment, we paid thirty dollars each per month to rent pre-development Model Cities housing, and we disbelieved in the clock or regular meals.

Today we are academics, musicians, house cleaners, library workers, and rich business owners (the three anarchists of my original "collective"). But then it was 1977, that short, wild window of time between the pill and AIDS. If you were there, and if you were not going to discos in polyester leisure suits, you really didn't have to stay for this whole story. You probably have stories yourself.

Was it fun, you might ask? The sex? Was it fun? Speaking for myself, I can say, No. It was exciting; it was exhausting. But for me it was a concept, a fantasy of the brain, not a joy of touching. I was projecting a future of happiness and productivity with a string of possible soul mates, trying on identities the way that

only the young can do. I had no idea that at a certain point in my life, just when I knew clearly who I was, time would start getting much shorter instead of infinitely stretching ahead.

I didn't know then that sex could be comfortable, fun, orgasmic, and sacred. That took me two more decades. May you not have to wait that long. But who says being young is better than being old? ▼

My First Grrrlover

By Mizblooze56

Her name was Kitsy. She was an artist, and we fell hard at the Women's Center. I was a mini-feminist, but a hard-core revolutionary. I don't recall what group we were in together, all I do remember was she had a boyfriend and lived in Cambridgeport, and they shared a he-driven Volvo. She had a huge loft across from the old South Station in a hand mannequin factory. Miles of space next to an old Hayes-Bickford, cold coffee served by a red-lipped waitress, open til?? There was an unknown but infamous spray painter nearby whose tag was long-nosed heads that sort of looked like guns—anyone remember that?

Kitsy and I would find an empty room at the Women's Center, lie down face-to-face, hold hands, and stare eye-to-eye for what seemed like days, weeks, eons. Her brown almond-shaped eyes melted my older-than-my real-age heart. Then, a "beep-beep" would shatter the silent

air. Him. She didn't need to say she "had to go." I hated him. Thief!

One day she was gone. Solid gone. Forever gone. Back to her moneyed family in Philly. That was 1977. Now at 48 I still fantasize about taking our groping in the children's room much, much further. I can't remember if I ever ran my needy young hands through her hair. Drat! I wonder if she's famous. Or thinks of me. ▼



Pictures from page 1

being a girl she would get mad at me and we wouldn't be friends anymore. So I asked my best friend Jen B. what to do. She suggested I write Tara a note telling her how I felt and asking her to ignore it if she didn't share my feelings.

At the same time, Tara confided in me that she was starting to have feelings for someone but she wouldn't tell me who. I was sure it was a guy and was absolutely crushed. But I decided to go ahead and give her the note anyway. And, to my surprise and joy I turned out to be the person she had a crush on.

From there grew a love that technically lasted a year and a half, though I still love her to this day with all my heart. She was my first everything. My first girlfriend, my first "I love you," my first sex, and my first blood. It was beautiful and despite how things turned out I wouldn't exchange it for anything in the world.

But young love rarely lasts. I was still under the sway of my mother and when our parents finally figured us out and all hell broke loose. My mother screamed and cried for days and threatened me with a priest and psychologist but ultimately only punished me for a month and I was never to speak to Tara again.

Tara's fate was worse. Her mother locked her up in a psych ward for a couple of weeks. Things were never the same after that. We did manage to sneak phone calls and visits but soon it was time for her to go to college. She had been accepted to a school in New York for her writing and I had decided to stay in Salem. Of course we vowed to keep in touch.

That isn't the end of the story, however. While in New York, Tara became addicted to heroin and a downward spiral of prostitution, arrests, stripping, disease, and 3:00 a.m. phone calls from hospitals because Tara had overdosed ensued. I stuck by her as best I could during this time, always hoping she would snap out of it. I even let her live with me for a while when she was trying to get clean. But on February 7th of 2002 she overdosed one last time. I received the phone call the next day and simply fell to the floor in tears.

Since then I have had her name tattooed on my arm and I visit her grave on the anniversary of her death and on her birthday of every year. There is a void in my life that will never be filled. I dedicate this piece to her. All I have are pictures of you... ▼

Research Study Needs Participants!

A graduate student in Women's Studies at Emory University is seeking women to interview for her dissertation research about women who have intimate relationships with women and men (who may or may not identify as bisexual). Interviews involve questions about relationship dynamics, sexual behavior, identity and health. An important goal of this project is to include women who are often left out of research: women of color, women with disabilities, rural women, and women who might not be "out" about their sexual identity or lives. To be eligible, volunteers must be at least 18 years of age and must have engaged in a sexual relationship(s) with women and men in the past five years. All interviews and information regarding volunteers will remain confidential. If you are interested in learning more about this study and/or participating in an interview, please contact Dawn Comeau at dawncomeau@gmail.com or 404-308-7788.

12th Annual BiCamp

This year's BiCamp will be held at the usual location in west-central Massachusetts from Thursday, September 1st through Monday (Labor Day) afternoon. BiCamp is a long-weekend camping trip for bisexuals and their friends. We have a beautiful camping area all to ourselves and usually get about 70-75 people. The campsite borders on a river with clothing-optional swimming just a short walk through the woods. BiCamp is "easy camping," with showers, flush toilets, and the ability to drive right to your tent site. Information and registration are available at www.biversity.org/bicamp.html.

Campers will be able to register online using either their Paypal account or a credit card (via PayPal). There is also a printable form at the web site, if you would rather mail in a check. Registration is quite affordable, with a sliding scale of \$15-\$50 depending on what you can afford and how long you plan to stay. You must be at least 18 years of age (or accompanied by a parent or guardian). Questions can be directed to bicamp@tdint.com.

6-10-00

By Jennifer Williams

Comes the voice like a shot in the dark...she tells me she is moving to New Orleans. No plans, no job, no place to stay. Leaving tomorrow at 8:00 a.m. with her latest boyfriend. I wonder if she is using again. It seems likely. I haven't heard from her in over a month, though I suppose the phone works both ways. Do I frighten her? I know my reasons but what are hers? This new "chapter" as she calls it frightens me. I wonder if that was our last conversation. I hope not. I am scared for her. I want to cry and I wish I could take all this away from her.

She told me she had nothing to stay here for. That hurt. Why couldn't she stay here for me, or for herself? I had really hoped that she was getting better. I might call her mother. Part of me wanted to beg her not to go, but I just couldn't bring myself to. Maybe someday she'll read this. Part of me envies her just being able to take off to New Orleans, but I know that we could never have the kind of life that I had wanted for us. I want to tell her that she's the one, that she'll always be the one. I don't know if it would make any difference.

I'm so afraid that I'll never see her again. That she will die and I won't ever know. Just writing that makes me want to cry. I don't even think that I could look at a picture of her right now. She said, "I love you." What does that mean to her? Is it just something she's gotten used to saying? How come I can't tell people how I really feel anymore? I can only picture myself writing it. Did she say it so she could have someone to call in the middle of the night when she runs out of money, or did she really mean it somewhere inside of her? I don't know.

She isn't the same girl anymore. This girl takes a drag from a Camel every other breath. It's like having a conversation with a pack of cigarettes. This girl has a new boyfriend every time I talk to her and I have to wonder how many of them know she is diseased. How many really care? Why doesn't it ever work for this girl? This girl shoots venom into her arms. Why can't she see? Why can't she see that there are people that really care about her and want her to be happy and healthy? Maybe she does and she just can't handle it. Has anyone ever said any of this to her? I just don't know.

I'll try to call her tomorrow. Maybe I'll say something, maybe I won't. ↘

POETRY

My Love

By Michelle Polischuk

walking up to you
like a child
with a strange gift

arms outstretched
hands cupped
guarding it
til you're close enough to see

my eyes open wide
innocent
trusting
led by blind faith
that you'll know what to do
with this thing;
this gift

I show it to you:
a small and frightened
injured little bird
trembling, hurt

raising it up
for you to take it
to care for it
hold it dear to you
keep it safe
that it may heal


I'm giving you my heart—

will you take it?

will you keep it safe?

First from page 1

joint custody of with his ex-wife. He and I would take walks in a park nearby on our lunch hour. We both knew I was a lesbian, but fell for each other anyway and became lovers. He was my first male love. With both the emotional connection and sexual attraction in place, the word "bisexual" loomed heavily in my mind. It was a turning point in my life, and in my sexual identity.

I have identified as bisexual for the last 11 years. Living a genuine and honest life is of great importance to me. In regards to my bisexual identity, this does not require me to be non-exclusive in my relationships. Embracing my bisexuality and acknowledging that I have attractions and sexual desires for both men and women is what I need to be real. 

Heartache

By Michelle Polischuk

I told my heart not to skip a beat
I told my eyes not to smile
but you tipped your heart to me
and smiled

you welcomed me in
completely
learned all my secrets
found all my scars
and you still love me
with all of my flaws

then with hands trembling
and pen to page
I confessed my love
expressed my desire
and asked if you might love me
with the same fire

and you tell me no
because
you're not gay?

we share intimacy
in so many ways
but still you keep
the purest, deepest
from me

because
you're too afraid
of what might happen
if one time
you reach for my hand
and don't let go

Fertility Awareness Class

This class is designed for women who are interested in getting pregnant, avoiding pregnancy, or getting to know their cycles better. Classes will be held once/month for 4 months, June-Sept (Class dates and times to be determined by the group). Cost is \$130 and includes charts and thermometers. Benefits of fertility awareness include getting to know your body better, facilitating diagnosis of a reproductive problem, effective form of birth control, and will maximize your odds of conception (not a bad idea for women paying for sperm!). Special focus will be on women who are planning on getting pregnant through insemination, but all are welcome! Class will be facilitated by a Certified Midwife. Contact Audra Karp in Jamaica Plain at 617-522-8383 or audrakarp@verizon.net.

BBWN-Chat: Connecting Online with BBWN

For a number of years, BBWN has had three email lists (also known as "listservs") to facilitate communication within the Boston-area bi women's community. Due to the low traffic on some lists, two of the email lists will no longer be used. Please start using [bbwn-chat](mailto:bbwn-chat@taxgrrrl.com) for all postings about events for or of interest to members of BBWN and other self-identified bi and bi-friendly women in and around the Boston area, communication between self-identified women in the Boston area who would like to help plan, shape, and implement events, programs, actions, and policies of the BBWN, and general discussion between BBWN members.

To subscribe to [bbwn-chat](mailto:bbwn-chat@taxgrrrl.com), send an e-mail message to: bbwn-chat-request@taxgrrrl.com and include only the word "subscribe" (without the quotes) in the body of the message. We hope to hear from you online!

Annual Swim for Life

The 18th Annual Provincetown Harbor Swim for Life AIDS Benefit will be held Saturday, September 10 at the Boatslip Beach Club in Provincetown. It is a 1.4 mile open water swim and paddles about Provincetown Harbor. A minimum of \$100 in pledges is required. For more info, contact Swim for Life, P.O. Box 819, Provincetown, MA 02657, 508-487-1930, thecompact@comcast.net, www.swim4life.org.

The Sweet Bite of First Love(s)...

By Stephanie B.

It's fitting that the current topic for BBWN is "first love," as this is a time in my life when I am attempting to commit to my, hopefully, "last" love, as my partner and I discuss things like engagement, marriage, premarital counseling, finances, where to live, etc. Thus, thoughts of Eddie* and Sonora* (names have been changed to protect the innocence frozen in time) had already been drifting up through the cheesecloth battlefield of old ghosts, reminding me so bittersweetly of the superficial passion of youth, even before I learned of this issue's theme. Thank goodness I now have an excuse to dwell excessively and idealistically on the episodes of youth. My furtive think-backs, until now, were merely serving commitment-phobia. So, here we go...

My first realized boy love: Eduardo, AKA, Eddie. I noticed Eddie's incredibly full lips (Angelina Jolie had nothing on this guy) and dark, "new wave" style hair immediately, first day of tenth grade, from across the class in homeroom. I stared as often as I could for days and weeks, not having much excuse to talk to him as we were from different sides of the tracks. One day, however, I noticed him getting on my bus, facilitating an increase in my heart rate and blood flow. After a few days of riding the bus, I conspired to arrive after him, and, noticing a seat next to him, managed to sit down without having a heart attack. At this point I was close enough to inhale his cologne: Lagerfeld, which is forever connected to him in my memory, and my favorite cologne to this day. At any rate, girl managed to speak to boy, girl continued to become smitten with boy, and boy eventually reciprocated, confirming the luck that girl had in love.

I found out he lived relatively close, and began riding my bicycle over to his home after school to rendezvous with his soft, full voluptuous lips, and the sweet charm, like the condensed milk he fed me, that dripped from his smackers. Such dizzy pleasures—kissing and touching softly, murmuring together, and sipping that condensed milk from a can—a very erotic and clever sublimation of desire.

The sweat dreams ended as I eventually came to learn that he was becoming mixed up in drugs, and that his Venezuelan family, who were Mormon, would not allow the drug situation to fester at any cost. They eventually instituted a house arrest, resulting in Eddie running away with his best friend. He was quickly located in Utah and was returned briefly to his parent's home in Houston until

they could ship him off to Venezuela, in hopes of removing him from all temptation. Luckily the information came down the pike fast enough for me to see him one last time, sequestered in his home until his flight out. My parents had gone out for the night, I sneaked over, perhaps on bicycle (cheesecloth memory here), defying my "babysitting" brother's watch, for one last sweet kiss.

Triumphantly, I remember going into his apartment and seeing him with all his friends. Bursting my bubble, he put on the typical teenage boy "I'm with my friends, therefore I can't look sensitive, and I must ignore you" face. I became upset and told someone about this—perhaps his sister, who was about 2 years older (who, with those very same lips, I had a bit of a crush on). Eddie got the message and left his buddies to be alone with me outside. At this point the doors of passion broke any walls down between us, and I found myself proclaiming things I have never proclaimed to anyone since, such as "I want to have your baby." Luckily we were out in the parking lot with no bed available to facilitate this. Our hands did find their way all over our bodies and under our clothes, making this last night together a "sky rocket tonight, afternoon delight," nearly giving birth to meteorites. But alas, I was a bit unschooled in my body's potential, only able to experience the crescendo, not the climax.

I never saw him again after that night, but I had many pictures of him in my photo album, and he had video footage he took of me putzing about his house a few weeks before the turmoil began. It was almost as if he sensed he may be leaving, and was already recording memories. He also had the many juvenile love poems I wrote to him, full of that wonderful syrupy sweet stuff only teens can produce. Later I heard he was working in some telemarketing position in Venezuela, and I was almost able to get his phone number. However, I was too chicken by then, and the memories of this bright love were dimming under the floodlights of new loves around every corner. Honestly, part of me did not want any contact, for fear of contaminating the memories and perception of my "first love" (and star-crossed, to boot!). Every now and then I wonder if he is still in South America. Did he escape the drugs? Does he have kids, a career, a wife, a divorce, a business, my poems, and the video footage? I don't wonder too long, however, as I prefer to see him exactly as he was: the most

beautiful boy in the world whom I was able to catch.

First realized girl love: Sonora.

Although I knew I was potentially bisexual early in my freshman year of college, I didn't really confront the possibility of this until I met Sonora, a delicate tiny golden-skinned freshman originally from the Philippines. Sitting across the cafeteria, I often stared, surreptitiously (or so I thought), at her very full, voluptuous lips (sense a pattern here?). One day we got to talking about things of a more personal nature, as exploratory freshmen are wont to do, and she revealed that she had had dreams about women and might be attracted to them.

She was a poetess, who spoke with a sibilant "s." I loved watching her lips move, and hearing the lushness that spilled from them, especially when she spoke of visits to her native land. When she revealed her attraction to women, aside from nearly jumping up and down with ecstasy, as a militant feminist, I simply affirmed her rights and assured her she was not crazy. Soon after this conversation we found ourselves alone and began the novitiate woman-a-woman mating dance of jittery nerves, gushing words,

and tender touches. Eventually, after much back and forth, I finally experienced the inconceivable softness of her lips, even silkier and more decadent than Eddie's. However, I did not have the same fervor for her as I did for Eddie, perhaps due to her worrisome personality and the greater taboo involved in our exploratory endeavors. But my body, now more self-versed, experienced the full breadth and depth of those "skyrockets tonight" and meteor showers galore.

Perhaps I am lucky that my memory is not so great, and that my loves shine brightly for a half-life or two, diminishing into the backdrop of the heavens to allow the new stars and rockets to burst forth. My memories fade like an image from a shroud, the dust of time washing away the lines to leave vague impressions of the past, like an emblem pressed flat. Because of this natural evolution, every new coupling is like a first love. And every coupling of an old love can still be like a first kiss. So that this, my potentially "last" love, can be fresh forever with a few memory tricks and light switch flicks (the commitment-phobia will fade, won't it?). Isn't a great relationship one where you can have that first kiss time and time again? I'm a lucky girl, then. ▽

Michigan Womyn's Music Festival

Join thousands of women August 9-14 for the 30th anniversary of the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival! This year's festival includes over 40 performances, hundreds of workshops, a film festival, a crafts fair, and fitness and dance classes. Ferron, Indigo Girls, Toshi Reagon, Tribe 8, Holly Near, Ember Swift, The Butchies, and the Topp Twins (who can yodel like nobody's business) round out the musical performances. For more information, contact WWTMC, P.O. Box 22, Walhalla, MI 49458 or www.michfest.com.

Bisexual Resource Center Presents *Getting Bi*

The Bisexual Resource Center is proud to announce the ground-breaking book, *Getting Bi: Voices of Bisexuals Around the World*. Featuring 184 essays written by bi and bi-friendly authors and activists from over thirty countries, this book offers a unique contribution to the ever-growing field of bisexual literature.

Editor Robyn Ochs and co-editor Sarah Rowley, both active members of BBWN, teamed up to gather writings from around the globe about bisexual community, identity, politics, coming out, relationships, desire, and more. *Getting Bi* is the perfect read for bi, queer, curious, and questioning people; everyone from the newly out to long-time community leaders; and bi allies of all stripes as well.

Getting Bi is available for purchase at all of the events the Bisexual Resource Center and Robyn Ochs will be attending. Robyn's

speaking schedule can be found at www.robynochs.com. The Bisexual Resource Center will be at Boston's GLBT Pride (Saturday, June 11th), Rockland County's Pride (Nyack, NY, Sunday, June 12th), Providence, Rhode Island Pride (Saturday, June 19th) and New York City Pride (Sunday, June 26th). You can also order online at www.biresource.org. ▽



An eager group of volunteers gathered at the Bisexual Resource Center on May 14th to mail out the new *Getting Bi* book for pre-paid orders.

QueerDharma Explores Queer Freedom

The QueerDharma Freedom Retreat is a three-day workshop for queer men and women at the Karme Choling Shambhala Meditation Center in beautiful Barre, Vermont. The retreat will feature an intensive schedule of sitting-meditation sessions, brief talks, and intimate, sensory awareness exercises—all aimed at helping participants learn how loving kindness and meditative discipline can unlock the prisons we have created in our minds. Scheduled for July 1-4, it will be led by Roshi Enkyo O'Hara, founder of New York's Village Zendo, and Craig Smith, founder of QueerDharma. Registration is \$250, which covers tuition and meals. Accommodations are available at a modest additional charge. Registration and information regarding accommodations can be obtained at www.karmecholing.org, www.queerdharma.org, or by calling Karme Choling 802-633-2384.

Bi Bi Love or Twice-told Tales

By Ellyn Ruthstrom

My first love with a person was with Steve. We fell in love my first year at a small UCC-affiliated liberal arts college in Ohio. Oddly enough, he was a born-again Christian, though when you first met him you wouldn't have known it. He just seemed like a cute guy from Ohio whose sport was wrestling (so he had a great ass and arms), loved to camp and hike, and loved to smoke pot.

We had first met in the round-shaped college library, and flirted without raising our voices so as not to disturb others. Soon we started taking walks to the local health food store to buy Ak-mak crackers and Ricola cough drops, and when his brother would drive down from Toledo we'd go out to a local park and get high. We went to a Harry Chapin concert, got snowed in at his parents house during a blizzard, and eventually I got him to have sex with me.

It was kind of weird, I must say, that with all the publicity out there about horny teen guys who are just dying to have sex I had to find one who was conflicted about what Jesus would say about it. At first he didn't reveal his hesitancy, he just didn't let our makeout sessions get past a certain point. Then I complained that I wanted more physical affection, so he gave me more (excepting intercourse) with the belief that I would get tired of the physical and want more emotional instead. I was 18 years old, for god's sake! I wanted more!

So here comes the twist. There was this friend of Steve's named Dave. Dave was an uber-born-again. You couldn't talk to this guy for 5 minutes without hearing about something to do with god's will, blah blah blah. Despite that, Dave was funny and smart and he had a strong influence over Steve that I didn't like. Eventually, Steve told me that Dave believed that I was bad for Steve because I was the devil's temptress.


Well, the devil's temptress got her way. I got Steve to stay one night when my roommate was away and we just kept on going past the biblical exhortations all the way to the truly sacred incantations of "Oh God!"

Not surprisingly, years later Dave came out as gay and I've been told is some big queeny activist in Chicago. I'd like to see him at a reunion some day. I'm sure he was in love with Steve, just as I was. Internalized homophobia is so sad, so destructive, and especially toxic when it has organized religion as a chaser.

My first love with a woman was Robin. I had had a few dalliances with women already, and an unrequited crush, but hadn't fallen hard for anyone until I met Robin when I was 30. We were co-workers, both telephone fundraisers who used our charming voices to get progressives to part with their money over the phone. I was impressed with her way of making people feel really comfortable with her giggly laugh and polite warmth. In between calls we'd chat casually and I soon found out she was from Ohio and I would have had to have been from Mars to not know that she was a lesbian. OK, so this was Northampton and lesbians are swarming all over the place out there (one fine reason to move there after my divorce, I thought), but evidently she hadn't picked up on the fact that I could be queer too.

She asked me to go to dinner with two of her friends and her. I said sure. I was hoping it was a date but thought it odd about the friends. When I met her at the Italian restaurant with her friends, she handed each of us a red rose, not wanting to make me feel uncomfortable and singled out (she told me later). We had a drink and then her friends revealed that they had to go; I don't recall the excuse. We ended up having this lovely romantic Italian dinner with glasses of red wine and swapping stories about Ohio.

I had walked to the restaurant, so it was a good excuse to get a ride home in Robin's pick-up truck. It had been a great night and I thought she was adorable, so when we parked outside my apartment and our chit-chat had died down I leaned over and planted a warm wet kiss on Robin's sweet lips. When we stopped she let out this, "Wow! And I wasn't even sure you liked women!" I'm sure I must have said something snide like "Well, I don't like *all* women." We had a good chuckle as she went on to recount all her fears that I was straight. We were together for two and a half years.

A while ago I googled Steve. I'm pretty sure I found him. He was listed as a church leader in an evangelical congregation in Michigan, probably one of those churches that tell you how to vote from the pulpit. And Robin, well, she and I moved to Ohio together for me to work on my master's degree. We parted company there and she went on to meet her life partner who she bought a house with. I can't imagine myself with either of these people today, but their love will always be a part of me and my history, devil's temptress that I am. 

CALENDAR *continued from page 12*

July 12 ♦ Tuesday

Married But Not Straight Women's Discussion Group, 7:30-9 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge. See June 14th.

July 13 ♦ Wednesday

Boston Queer Poly Women's Discussion Group, 7-8:45 p.m. at the Diesel Cafe. See June 8th.

July 14 ♦ Thursday

Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting, 6:30-8:30 p.m. All bi community members welcome. See June 9th.

July 16 ♦ Saturday

Biversity Brunch, 11:30 a.m. Christopher's is doing Sunday brunch again, so we're going to go check it out. Located at 1920 Mass. Ave. in Porter Square. Nearest T stop is Porter Square on the Red Line.

July 17 ♦ Sunday

BBWN Brunch at Deb Morley's in Arlington, noon. Bring a brunch dish or drinks to share. Call or e-mail for directions at 781-777-1054 or debmo345@comcast.net. After the brunch, we can take a walk down by the Mystic River.



July 19 ♦ Tuesday

Bi Rap at the Women's Center, 7:30-9:00 p.m. The topic is: "Fantasy Relationships: What's Your Ideal?" See June 7th.

July 21 ♦ Thursday

Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-9 p.m. See June 1st.

August 2 ♦ Tuesday

Bi Rap at the Women's Center, 7:30-9:00 p.m. See June 7th.

August 3 ♦ Wednesday

Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-9 p.m. See June 1st.

August 9 ♦ Tuesday

Married But Not Straight Women's Discussion Group, 7:30-9 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge. See June 14th.

August 10 ♦ Wednesday

Boston Queer Poly Women's Discussion Group, 7-8:45 p.m. at the Diesel Cafe. See June 8th.

August 11 ♦ Thursday

Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting, 6:30-8:30 p.m. All bi community members welcome. See June 9th.

August ?? ♦ Sunday

DATE NOT KNOWN AT PRESS TIME:

BBWN Vegetarian Brunch at Debbie Block-Schwenk in Allston, noon. Bring a veggie brunch dish and/or drinks to share. Call or e-mail for date and directions at 617-782-2754 or two_point_five_cats@yahoo.com.

August 16 ♦ Tuesday

Bi Rap at the Women's Center, 7:30-9:00 p.m. See June 7th.

August 17 ♦ Thursday

Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-9 p.m. See June 1st.

August 19 ♦ Friday

BiWomen Submissions Deadline. This issue's theme is "Envisioning a New World" See page 2 for more ideas. Send submissions to: BiWomen, P.O. Box 400639, Cambridge, MA, 02140 or e-mail to nellythrustmor@aol.com.

August 30 ♦ Wednesday

NEW DAY, NEW TIME and NEW LOCATION! BiWomen mailing, 7:30-9 p.m. in Arlington. Please contact Katrina at 617-833-3035, or Deb at 781-777-1054 for directions. Join us to label, stuff, and seal!

Visit BBWN online at:
biresource.org/bbwn
for a calendar listing of
local bisexual events.

Biversity Boston is the mixed gender bisexual Network of Greater Boston.

Ongoing Events

Wednesdays:

Gendertalk. 8:30-9:30 p.m. on WMBR 88.1 FM. Deals with transgender and queer issues.

Women's Club Nights

Thursdays: Queer-a-oke, 9 p.m.-2a.m., the Midway Cafe, 3496 Washington St. Jamaica Plain. No cover.

Fridays: Retro 80s music to dance to at Toast, 70 Union Square, Somerville, 9 p.m.-1 a.m. \$5 cover.



SUBSCRIPTION RATE

for BiWomen
(sliding scale)

- ___ \$0-\$20 (pay what you can)
- ___ \$20-\$30 (suggested)
- ___ \$30-\$100 Extra Special Donor
- ___ Renewal
- ___ New Subscriber

BiWomen wants you!!!

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____

BBWN, P.O. BOX 400639, Cambridge, MA 02140

The "Bi Office"

is the Bisexual Resource Center, located at 29 Stanhope Street, behind Club Cafe, right next door to Bertucci's and just down the street from the Hard Rock Cafe. For info call 617-424-9595.

Ongoing Events

1st & 3rd Tuesdays:

Bi Women's Rap, 7:30-9:00 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge. For info and discussion topics call 617-354-8807.

2nd Tuesdays:

Married Bi Women's Discussion Group, 7:30-9:00 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge. Info: 617-354-8807.

First Wednesdays, Third Thursdays:

Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-9 p.m. The group meets at the Bisexual Resource Center at 29 Stanhope St. in Boston. Call 617-424-9595 for info.

CALENDAR

June 1 ♦ Wednesday

Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-8:45 p.m. An informal support group for people who think they may be bisexual or attracted to more than one sex. A small donation is requested to help pay for the space. The group meets at the Bisexual Resource Center at 29 Stanhope St. in Boston. Call 617-424-9595 for info.

June 7 ♦ Tuesday

Bi Rap at the Women's Center, 7:30-9:00 p.m. A discussion group for bisexual, bi-friendly, and questioning women. Topic: "What Men Think About Bi Women" Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., 617-354-8807.

June 8 ♦ Wednesday

Boston Queer Poly Women's Discussion Group, 7-8:45 p.m. at the Diesel Cafe, 257 Elm Street in Somerville. T stop is Davis on the Red Line. The group meets to discuss issues relevant to women in the poly community, especially those of interest to queer women. We range from social chatting to more in-depth discussions, depending on what people want to talk about. If you haven't attended before, please email Donna at dalbino83@yahoo.com to arrange a way to recognize the group.

June 9 ♦ Thursday

Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting, 6:30-8:30 p.m. All bi community members are welcome and encouraged to attend. The meeting is at the Living Center at 29 Stanhope Street in Back Bay.

June 11 ♦ Saturday

BBWN Pre-Pride Brunch, 10:00 a.m.-noon, Community Church of Boston at Copley Square, 565 Boylston Street. Start your Pride Day with the annual BBWN-sponsored Bi Pride Brunch. The Bi Brunch is a great place to see old friends, make new ones, have some good food, and get psyched for the march. We ask for a \$5-15 sliding scale donation to cover the costs and hopefully make a little for the BBWN treasury. Nearest T stop is Copley on the Green Line. Some bi merchandise will be available. Then join the bi contingent and march off at noon for the Boston Common! Would you like to be a volunteer at this year's event? If you would like to help set up, greet people at the door, or clean up afterwards, please contact Ellyn at 617-623-5535 or nellythrustmor@aol.com.



June 14 ♦ Tuesday

Married But Not Straight Women's Discussion Group, 7:30-9 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St. A support group for bi and lesbian women who are married or in long-term relationships. Contact Denise at dpp1029@rcn.com for information. Call 617-354-8807 for directions.

June 16 ♦ Thursday

Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-8:45 p.m. See June 1st.

June 19 ♦ Sunday

Biversity Brunch, 1 p.m. Christopher's is doing Sunday brunch again, so we're going to go check it out. Located at 1920 Mass. Ave. in Porter Square. Nearest T stop is Porter Square on the Red Line.

June 20 ♦ Monday

Getting Bi Release Party, Boston Living Center 7-9 p.m. *Getting Bi: Voices of Bisexuals Around the World* is here! Come join us in celebration, hear a few readings from the book, and get your own copy. Light refreshments provided. The Boston Living Center is at 29 Stanhope St., Boston near the Back Bay Orange Line T stop and the Copley Square Green Line T stop. For more information, call Sheeri at 857-205-9786 or e-mail sheeri@biresource.org.

June 21 ♦ Tuesday

Bi Rap at the Women's Center, 7:30-9:00 p.m. Topic: "Where to Meet Like-minded Women: Hiking groups, support groups, charity work, Internet chat, cafes?" See June 7th.

June 23 ♦ Thursday

NEW METROWEST GROUP FORMING: Support for Married but not Straight Women II: This is a peer-led FREE support group for women who are married to men but who also are attracted to women or in a relationship with a woman. The group will meet once a month on the fourth Thursday of the month from 7-9 p.m. For location and more information, please contact Denise at MARBLESDGP@rcn.com.

July 5 ♦ Tuesday

Bi Rap at the Women's Center, 7:30-9:00 p.m. Topic: "Lesbian Drama: The Overly Emotional Interactions Between Women Lovers." See June 7th.

July 6 ♦ Wednesday

Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-9 p.m. See June 1st.

CALENDAR continues on page 11

Envisioning a New World

For a longtime "glass is half full" activist --

by Lani Ka'ahumanu

As someone who had the luxury of a 5 year break from the battle, I just have to say - I don't think those of you who have been battling every day realize how much you've changed the world! I am in awe and so incredibly proud of all of you.

Just 25 years ago, as a teenager trying to figure out my identity, the word bisexual didn't even exist in the rural part of my world (except in regards to David Bowie, but what did THAT have to do with real life?) Other than a couple clinical and depressing books, there was no way to learn about the topic.

Just 15 years ago, "Bi Any Other Name" gave so much of us hope... there are others like us somewhere - normal people willing to admit who that are - and even be photographed? Wow! I don't think kids who are growing up with Google can imagine how invisible we were

Just 10 years ago, we couldn't even sit at the table with most of the gay/lesbian groups... so many saw us as lying to ourselves, traitors, taking the easy way out. yada, yada

Just 5 years ago, we were stuck in the seemingly endless battle for inclusion. It seemed like we were on this endless cycle of showing up and being counted at every pride parade, every creating change conference and only hearing the word "bisexual" said by one pride speech maker - Kate Clinton, making a joke... countering every one who said "gay & lesbian" with "glbt".. And today, the advocate news is the advocate glbt news. Outq radio is bi and trans inclusive (except for maybe frank dicario). Michaelangelo Signorile makes a point at least once per week that gays need to get over their biphobic crap. Brenda is honored for her true work and her partner status is listed in a major "gay" magazine. There are

Half full continues on page 6

A New Old-Fashioned Village



Adapted from the Cohousing Association of the U.S. with new material by Buzz Harris.

Cohousing is a type of collaborative housing that overcomes the alienation of modern living in which no-one knows their neighbors and there is no sense of community. Residents have private dwellings with their own kitchens, living-dining rooms, etc., but there are also extensive common facilities. The common house may include a large dining room, kitchen, lounges, meeting rooms, recreation facilities, library, workshops, and childrens's space.

Usually, cohousing communities are designed and managed by the residents. They are intentional neighborhoods: the people are consciously committed to living as a community; the physical design itself encourages that and facilitates social contact. The typical cohousing community has 20 to 30 single family homes along a pedestrian street or clustered around a courtyard. Residents of cohousing communities often have several optional group meals in the common building each week.

See www.cohousing.org for more information.

There is a new, queer-friendly cohousing group forming in the Boston area - Common Hearth Cohousing. The first meeting will take place at the Cambridge Sq. 'T') from 3:30pm - 5:30pm on Sunday, Sept. 18th. Childcare is available.

Email buzz_harris@yahoo.com for more info. RSVP if you would like to attend. ▼



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Volunteers of the Month

Gail Zacharias

Terry

Deb Morley

Linda Blair

Katrina Piehler

And many more
fabulous people!
You know who
you are!

Thanks this
month to the
generous
book giver:
Liz Cutler

BiWomen is published
quarterly.

Editor:

Ellyn Ruthstrom.

Guest Editor for this
issue:

Debbie Block-Schwenk

Printed on
recycled paper

The Boston Bisexual Women's Network is a feminist, not-for-profit collective organization whose purpose is to bring women together for support and validation. It is meant to be a safe environment in which women of all sexual self-identities, class backgrounds, racial, ethnic and religious groups, ages, abilities and disabilities are welcome. Through the vehicles of discussion, support, education, outreach, political action and social groups related to bisexuality, we are committed to the goals of full acceptance as bisexuals within the gay and lesbian community, and to full acceptance of bisexuality and the liberation of all gay people within the larger society.

From Vision to Action

To me, envisioning a new world is not enough. You've got to live it - build it, dance it, play it, read it. Write it. Be an activist around it. The articles in this issue show the diversity of ways members of our community dream - and how they work to bring those dreams to life.

When Ellyn asked for help editing this issue of *Bi Women*, I was glad I was able to step in. We have to stand up for each other and help each other - that's how we'll get to those worlds we envision. None of us can do it alone.

In this political and cultural climate that manipulates our fears and seeks to isolate us from each other and from our own power, positive visions of the future are more important than ever. As Lani Ka'ahumanu reminds us, we've made huge progress around bisexual issues. As Melinda Brown reminds us, the battle isn't over.

But we are stronger together, and we can support each other.

So it's time for you to step forward and help *Bi Womens'* vision. Maybe you've always wanted to write an article, but none of the topics inspired you. Write it anyway.

Maybe you've always wanted to learn desktop publishing, but didn't know how to start? Well, *Bi Women* is looking for new editorial volunteers and Ellyn and I and many of the other wonderful women in our community are happy to help you and teach you.

Maybe you've never written to share how much *Bi Women* has meant to you - or how you were able to give a copy to a friend who needed it. Let us know - share the way you live your lives and your visions.

Maybe you've always wanted to host a brunch - or even to attend one. You can. Details are all in here.

Together, we can make vision into reality. I hope you'll join us.

Debbie Block-Schwenk

Next in *BiWomen*:

BiWomen writers will have a choice of themes for December/January/February :

**Family Ties
Bis Just Want to
Have Fun
Gender Bending**

Pick a theme, tie them together, or write whatever's on your mind!

Deadline: November 18, 2005

New Quarterly Schedule:

BiWomen is now publishing on a quarterly rather than bi-monthly schedule. Subscriptions will be extended by two issues to compensate.

Please Submit to *BiWomen*!

Send articles, calendar entries, letters, black-and-white art, news, and views to:

BiWomen

P.O. Box 400639

Cambridge, MA 02140

or via e-mail to

NellyThrustmor@aol.com

If you do not want your name published, please tell us.

All articles and art appearing in this newsletter are copyrighted by the authors and artists.

Bi and GLBT Communities Respond to Biphobic Article

By Melinda Brown

On the very day Benedict Carey's article, "Straight, Gay or Lying? Bi Sexuality Revisited", headlined the Science section of the NY Times, I happened to be reading a section in William E. Burleson's new book, **Bi America** which describes a long term ongoing bisexual men's support group. The members of the group in Burleson's book would surely be surprised by the research Carey reported, which seemed to indicate that there was little evidence for male bisexuality.

As one might imagine, Carey's article created quite a stir in bisexual circles. Immediately hundreds made LiveJournal posts, wrote various blog articles and e-mailed across several continents. Some tried to find some humor in the situation, but many more struggled to find positive avenues for the anger they felt. How could the NY Times put forward such an astonishing claim? Half of the people in our conversations apparently did not exist.

The Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD), the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF) and Fairness and Accuracy In Reporting quickly stepped up to question the meth-

ods used by senior researcher J. Michael Bailey and his team and issued action alerts (see Arnold article in National News section of the **Church Street Freedom Press** July 14, 2005 edition). Journalists for many LGBT publications tempered the Times article with commentary from the bisexual community.

Yet given the Times' recognized news authority, this story made its way unedited to news venues across the globe. So a number of LGBT publications reprinted the story with few changes - at most shortening the article for length. At least one publication, 365gay.com <<http://365gay.com/>> went even further. Re-titling the article, "Is Bisexuality Self Delusion?", an anonymous 365gay.com staff member added women to the original study's faulty conclusion that bisexuality in **men** may not exist, by stating that the study "suggests there is no such thing as bisexuality" - period.

Fortunately, this type of thinking was not the general rule. In fact, Matt Foreman, the executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, initiated a conference call between bisexual community activists, leaders and allies, staff of

Community Response continues on pg 7

Brunch Coordinator Wants You to Host!

BBWN potluck brunches are a great way to meet other bi women in the Boston area. We try to hold a brunch in a member's home each month so that people can relax and share food and experiences in a safe space. Deb Morley is the brunch coordinator, so please contact her at debmo345@comcast.net if you are interested in hosting a brunch. Thanks Deb for volunteering! And check out the calendar on pages 10-12 for the brunches and other activities coming up in September, October, and November. Hope you can join us.

Bi Pride 2005

BBWN's annual pre-pride brunch was a great success once again this year. Some of those celebrating were below: Ellyn Ruthstrom (center) with Claire (left) and Elena. To the right are Annie Goglia (left) and Lynne Levine. More photos on pages 7 and 9.



**Spiritual Progressives &
GLBT Activists Gather
for National Training
Summit in the Heartland**

The Fairness Project is convening a conference on "Strengthening the Bond: Progressive Values, Gay Rights and the Faith Community." The three-day summit, to be held in Kansas city from Oct. 21 - 23, brings together gay and straight activists, allies, students, ministers, lay leaders, and committed progressives from all walks of life grappling with the issues of fairness, equality and religious bigotry.

There are four primary events in the 2005 Fairness Project Summit: a public lecture with Paul Loeb (author of *THE IMPOSSIBLE WILL TAKE A LITTLE WHILE*) on Friday, October 21st; a full-day training conference followed by a documentary film showcase on Saturday, October 22nd; and, an ecumenical workshop service and brunch on Sunday, October 23rd.

For more information and a complete schedule of all 2005 Fairness Project Summit's events, times and directions, visit www.fairnessproject.org or call (816) 931-0738. Registration is available online, by mail or over the phone.

The complete registration fee \$89 in advance, \$99 at the door. Admission to some events can be purchased separately.

Life is Not A Game

by Ellyn Ruthstrum

I'm not much of a gamer and I'm not even one of those sci-fi bis who love to explore all the different universes of humanity and extraterrestrials, so I find it odd that I'll start this piece about envisioning a new world with an example from the one game I do play.

I got my new SIMS2 game recently and have been getting familiar with the new features from the original one. I ventured into one of the already built families and discovered three male characters living together. One of them happened to be pregnant and soon gave birth to a daughter! Loved it. As a second wave feminist, I am steeped in the old feminist tracts that attribute much of women's oppression to the fact that we both physically give birth to children as well as fill most of the responsibilities of caring for them. In my new world, I would love it if either men or women could give birth and then hope that the sexes would therefore take a more egalitarian view to child-rearing. I really believe that if men could be the birthers and nurturers they'd see life differently and would promote a more life-affirming worldview.

The other thing I really like about the SIMS that would be wonderful to have in real-life is that all the characters seem to have bi-potential. Depending on how a character interacts with others determines who she/he gets the hots for. If their personalities hit it off then they may end up in bed together and I haven't had trouble having characters be involved with one sex or both (haven't come across trans in SIMS yet, but they may exist), sometimes at the same time, sometimes in serial relationships.

So, men having babies and everyone having bi potential. Actually, as I envision it, and I think this is very common to other bis, if everyone has bi potential then bi becomes meaningless. Everyone would just be sexual and affectionate with those they are compatible with and no one has to worry about particular sexual labels.

Like a typical Miss America contestant, I'd also like to achieve world peace in this new world. How does one achieve this

though? Why are people at war? The easy answer is money, land, power over others, and differences between people such as religion, ethnicity, class, etc. These are huge things to resolve in order to have peace. And do you get rid of people's differences or find a way to accept differences? We liberals would say the latter, but humanity so often tries to do the former. I can accept that someone is a Christian (or Muslim or whatever), but if that person is evangelical and believes they must try to convert everyone else to Christianity because they don't accept others, how do I accept that. So, isn't it contradictory if I wish for a world where there are only people in the world who are acceptable to me, for example, those who don't proselytize?

Part of all of this envisioning leads you to think about what really needs changing and what actually makes life interesting, albeit frustrating. Would I get rid of all things that frustrate me? What fun is that? And if you change some of those things, would some of the things you do like disappear as well? Interdependence and unforeseen consequences. I guess I just want to envision a world where I can still enjoy the simple pleasures of rubbing beneath my cat's chin and hearing her purr, the taste of dark chocolate, having my feet pulled by the ocean as the tide goes out, and having my girlfriend spoon me into dreamland. That's my kind of world. ▼



Visceral Threads Explores Connection & Rebirth Through Dance

Kelley Donovan & Dancers present the premier of *Visceral Threads*, an evening-length dance for twelve women, at the Dance Complex in Cambridge.

A work which explores internal transformation and expresses the intimate self, *Visceral Threads* uses serpentine movement emanating from the core based on images of a snake as a metaphor for transformation as it sheds its skin and grows a new one. Patterns evolve into duets as dancers lead, then follow; touch, then as quickly part, their rapid movements melding into intricate phrases evoked from images of forgiveness, letting go, circularity, unwrapping the self, approaching, retreating and water related images.

Kelley Donovan & Dancers
present

Visceral Threads

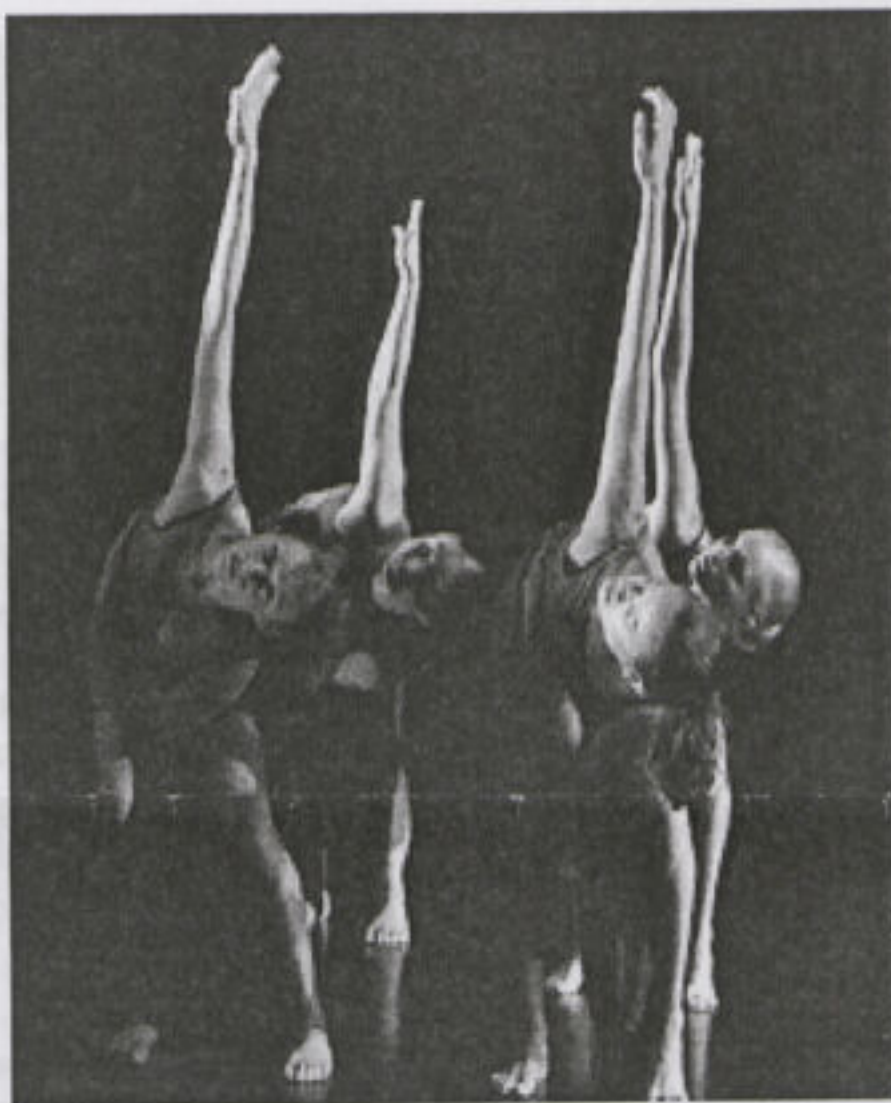
November 4th & 5th 2005,
at 8pm

Sunday November 6th at
7pm

at Dance Complex
536 Massachusetts Ave.,
Central Sq., Cambridge, MA
\$15, General Admission, \$12
for Student/Seniors/BDA
Call (781) 321-6188 for infor-
mation and reservations.

<http://>

www.kelleydonovandancers.com



Kelley's company creates dance collaboratively based on written imagery that she assigns to each dancer individually. From there Kelly assembles the structures and together the company creates variations of all kinds including: floor versions, turning, jumping, partnering with the original phrases of movement.

The company, in its eighth year, is under transformation, with eleven new company members chosen from over 30 dancers from all over New England including, Connecticut, Rhode Island and New Hampshire, who auditioned at Green St. Studios. Performers include Sarah Ackley, Madina Agenor, Sara Allen, Deb Clingan, Kelley Donovan, Isabel Esquitin, Monica Hixon, Cailin Good, Stephanie McHugh, Celeste Platt, Jane Samuel, and Mary Jane Tang. With a collaborative spirit, the company creates contemporary dance described by The Boston Herald as "lush weighted phrases, liquid in flow... muscular, yet lyrical." ▼



Lavender Dance Camp This Fall

Lavender Country and Folk
Dancers present
Fall Gender Role Free
Dance Camp
September 16-18 at Circle
Lodge, Hopewell Junction,
NY

Visit www.lcfd.org/lcfd/camp

Email camp@lcfd.org or
call 516-935-3913 for more
info

My Perfect World

By Mizblooze56

MassEquality Urges Action on Same-Sex Marriage Vote

The state legislature will be voting on **September 14th** on an amendment to ban same-sex marriage. Contact your legislators about this important issue today! See www.massequality.org or call 617-878-2300 for more details.

Camp Sister Spirit Proudly Announces

*Lesbilicious:
The Cookbook of
Camp Sister Spirit.*

This wonderful cookbook contains recipes, song lyrics, stories, pictures and more submitted by friends of the Camp. \$10 plus \$3 for shipping.

Send your order to:
Camp Sister Spirit
PO Box 12, Overt, MS
39464
or order by phone with
your Visa or MC
601-344-1411

Oh, sisters, this is SO easy for me to answer. A new world is a world in which I don't have to spend the whole ride in the handicapped van to the movie, concert, book reading, poetry slam, potluck dinner, writers' union get together, blues jam, tattoo parlor, etc., etc. obsessing about whether there are a lot of stairs, if the bathroom is downstairs - or if the stall is wide enough for my plus size self. Does anyone understand or has anyone been there, done that?

A perfect world I envision would be when I open my "Crane Drypants" catalog and really see a "26W" model, modeling a 26W pair of bootcut 5 pocket jeans in biker black and I really see that "baby's got back" just like me! She's not a size 7 - us ample girls gotta sit on our couches and squint and pretend our size 7 mama's "got back." And then we quickly ignore the section of "lounger" dresses (read: muumuu). ARGH!

I envision a perfect world where I don't and won't have to take an Ativan just to get up the guts to tell my potential new date, "I'm a large woman with tattoos, piercings, I smoke, I eat meat, I don't and won't bikini wax or pluck, I don't iron my jeans, I do read dirty mags, I like Harleys, I like Eminem and Ellen, too, and yes I have a therapist."

"And, hey, I read *Bust*, *Juxtapoz*, *Outlaw Biker* and *Martha Stewart Living*."

They're usually on 3 South into Brockton when I hit them with "the killer."

"I was born in the Bronx and I'm a Yank—"

I see the tire smoke from my apartment in Meford and I don't even get to finish that one.

A perfect world would be someone who says on the other end of the phone or across the café table: "It's ok, hon, with 5 or so years of therapy, you'll be a Red Sox fan. We'll fix you right up. Drink your latte - it's not a cold drink."

.....

Half Full from page 1

actually independent films with major bi characters who aren't tragic. How freaking cool is that??

Yes, Orbitz advertises it's "gay travel" not glbt travel. and yes, GLAAD won't actively monitor biphobia without us reminding them... and the HRC and The Blade haven't changed.. and every couple of years some idiot tries to prove we don't exist...

But, my god/dess!!! Not only is there a whole library of books on bisexuality, but kids can see themselves reflected in "Gay" magazines.. and on satellite radio.. and in movies..

And because of all your continuing hard, thankless work, to most of the world - it seemed to be a spontaneous evolution

Thank You



Community Response from pg. 3

the NGLTF and staff of GLAAD to brainstorm an action plan and response to the NY Times article. As a result, more copies of letters sent to the editors of the Times flew across the wires (many of which are archived at the NGLTF website). Even more conversation took place in the bisexual community. And many of us responded to the call to discuss this article within our local LGBT communities.

A main point of discussion is the claim that many bisexuals are really gay, and thus do not exist as a separate identity. Members of the bisexual community, especially those of us who run bi support groups, are quick to acknowledge that there are definitely people who identify as bisexual along the way to a gay or lesbian identity. What many lesbians and gays fail to recognize is the space the bisexual community offers these individuals to explore their sexual orientation. Many people who eventually identify as gay or lesbian have positive memories of their time spent in the bisexual community, which does not pressure them to conform to a specific identity during their exploration.

And the process moves the other way, as well. My friend Dove came out as a lesbian at the age of 15. In her early 30s, she realized an attraction to men as well, and found her local bisexual women's support group a good place to explore her new feelings. Though most of her relationships have been with women and she is cur-

rently partnered with a woman, Dove now calls herself bisexual. She feels that the bi community allows her to be all of who she is, even if she doesn't currently act upon her attraction to men.

Regardless of how someone comes to bisexuality, however, many people actually do identify and live as bisexual. As an open bisexual, I have been surprised at how often my self-disclosure is met by "I'm bisexual, too" or "I have a friend/relative/partner who is bisexual". I've met hundreds of bisexuals through support and discussion groups, as well as regional, national and international conferences on bisexuality. Bisexuals are everywhere - living in same and other sex relationships, being single, getting married in Massachusetts - pretty much everywhere that gays, lesbians and heterosexuals are found.

It seems there are bisexuals aplenty - both women and men.

*To read more about bi lives, the recently published *Getting Bi: Voices of Bisexuals from Around the World* (edited by Robyn Ochs and co-edited by Sarah Rowley; published by the Bisexual Resource Center) presents 184 essays by men and women of all ages and backgrounds from 32 countries. Additionally, Haworth Press will soon be releasing *Bi Men: Coming Out Every Which Way* edited by Pete Chvany, bisexual activist, and Ron Suresha, editor of numerous Bear anthologies. ▼

Some places to read about New Worlds:

James Tiptree, Jr., Literary Award

For Sci fi and fantasy works that deal with or explore gender and gender issues

<http://www.tiptree.org>

The Gaylactic Spectrum Awards

SF, fantasy and horror books with positive portrayals or explorations of GLBT themes, issues, or characters
www.Spectrumawards.org

Other lists:

<http://www.lambdasf.org/lbf/books/recommend.html>

Getting Bi (see ad on page 9)

Join the fun:

Boston Gaylaxians
www.gaylaxians.org

2006 Gaylaxicon
June 16-18, 2006

Toronto, Ontario, Canada
<http://gaylaxicon.gaylacticnetwork.org/2006/main.php>

Bi Community members turned out in force for Boston's annual Pride Parade



Help with a research study - or two!

I'm conducting an anonymous study on same-sex couples and marriage that involves a 10 to 20 minute websurvey. If you are at least 18 years old, live in Massachusetts, and are currently involved in a same-sex relationship that has been going on for at least 1 year, please participate.

Go to:

http://monticello.bc.edu/phpESP/public/survey.php?name=Same_sex_marriage_decisions

~~=Same sex marriage decisions~~

If you don't qualify for the study, but know someone who does, please pass the info on to them! Thanks. And let me know if you have any questions. Pam, lannutpa@bc.edu

I am working on my dissertation at Emory University in Atlanta and I'm looking for women who have relationships with women and men whether they choose to identify as bisexual or not. The interviews are confidential, last about 2 hours, and are tape recorded (all identifying names and places are changed).

Want to know more? Feel driven to tell your story? Of course you do! Email me for more details.

Hope to hear from you,
Dawn Comeau
(dawncomeau@gmail.com)

WHAT I WANT

by Robyn Ochs

WANT: synonyms: aim, aspire to, be smitten, choose, cotton to, covet, crave, crazy for, desiderate, die over, enjoy, fall for, fancy, go for, hanker after, hunger for, itch for, like, long for, lust after, mad for, pant, partial to, pine, spoil for, sweet on, sweet tooth, take to, thirst, wild for, wish for, yearn for, yen for

When I tell someone how I identify - be it my bisexual, queer, European-blend, Jewish, hybrid, mixed-class, feminist, activist identity, or any other of my many labels - I hunger for that to be the beginning of a conversation, not the end. "That's how you identify? How very interesting. Would you be willing to tell me more about what that means to you?" I crave for people to understand that having a one-word description of one aspect of Me is only a beginning, a clue. To really understand me, they need to talk to me, to ask more questions. I long to live in a world where difference is seen as a good thing, as something that enriches our lives and makes our conversations more interesting, and our collective experience richer. I aspire to get beyond the myth that safety lives in sameness, in conformity.

I am sweet on the idea of my friends standing up for me, watching my back, intervening when other people say stupid, ignorant things about one of my identities. I yen for doing the same for them. I thirst for my heterosexual friends to do more than say "I support marriage equality." I spoil for them to get involved - to send money to GLAD and EqualMarriage.org, to go out door-knocking to get petitions signed, to call, write and email their legislators.

I hunger for us to spend our precious time and our precious resources working toward making the world a better place: treating our environment with respect, treating our elders and our children - and those of us in the middle as well - with respect, taking care of each other, standing up for each other, learning, sharing, working and growing together.

I have a yen for, yearn for, itch for, lust after, am wild for, cotton to, am smitten with these things--

I fancy people who want these things too.

In Memoriam, Brenda Howard

by Alan Hamilton

Howard died of cancer at 58 on Tuesday, June 28, 2005. Howard was a tenacious BGLT/Leather activist who contributed immensely to the bi movement and to the bisexual, gay, lesbian, and transgender movements throughout the U.S. and around the world, including as a coordinator of the bisexual rights group, BiNet USA.

Howard was a major player in starting the annual Pride celebrations that take place every year around the world. She coordinated the 1-month anniversary rally and the 1-year rally/march commemorating the Stonewall Rebellion, which became the annual New York City Pride March. Howard also originated the idea for a week-long series of events around Pride Day, called Pride Week. Most U.S. states and many countries and cities around the world now celebrate Pride Day/Week annually, descended directly from those first marches and rallies in New York City which Howard coordinated and created.

Howard's activism included chairing the Gay Activists Alliance for many years; the Gay Liberation Front; the New York Area Bisexual Network's Info Line; the BiPAC bi activist group; numerous groups at "The Center" in New York, including the Bi-SM and Bi-AA groups; the 1983 March on Washington for Gay, Lesbian and Bi Rights and Liberation; and Stonewall 25 (1994).

Howard is survived by her partner, Larry Nelson.



"Let's Move to the Next Universe": Feminist Utopias

by Annie Goglia

I've been fascinated by utopias and science fiction since I was young. This type of fiction creates constructive criticism of what *is* by showing us what *could be*. I love reading these visions of the future and imagining my own version. In graduate school I wrote a paper called *Motherhood on the "Otherworld Journey": Nonsexist Parenting in Five Feminist Science-Fiction/Fantasy Novels*. I highly recommend them as good reading and food for thought:

Herland by Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *The Female Man* by Joanna Russ, *Woman on the Edge of Time* by Marge Piercy, *The Dispossessed* and *The Left Hand of Darkness* by Ursula LeGuin. ▼

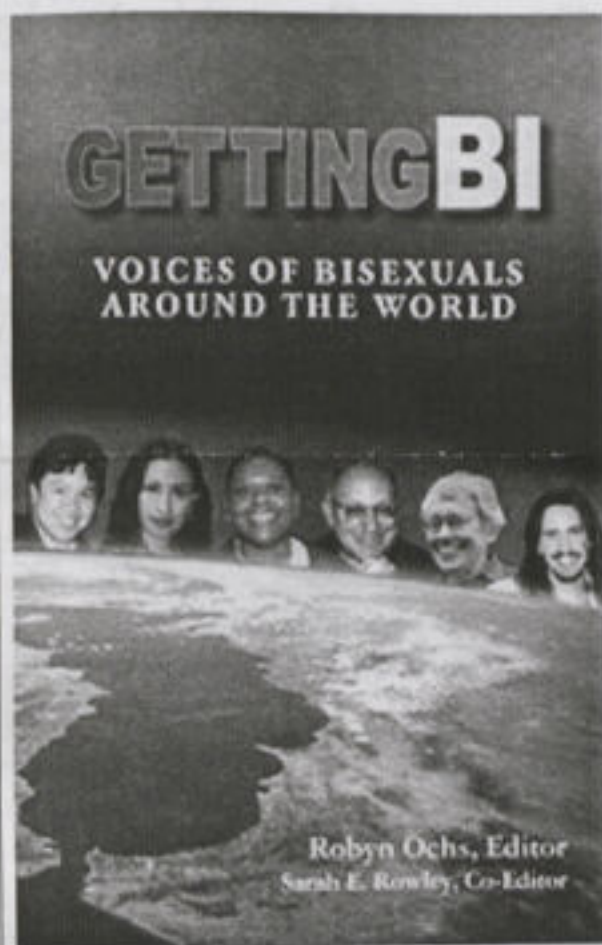
Julie and Luigi enjoyed the atmosphere of BBWN's pre-pride brunch.



18th Annual Provincetown Harbor Swim for Life and Paddler Flotilla

This will be the 18th year that hundreds will gather in Provincetown to swim and paddle across the harbor to raise money for HIV/AIDS services for the Provincetown community. With a commitment to raise a minimum of \$100 you can join the others on Saturday, September 10 on the 1.4 mile fundraiser. Visit www.swim4life.org for registration info.

Available Now!



**Getting Bi: Voices of
Bisexuals Around The
World**, edited by Robyn
Ochs and Sarah Rowley.

"*Getting Bi* is a stunning collection of first-person narratives by bisexuals from around the world... some contributors self-identify as queer, pansexual, omnisexual, or labelless, while others acknowledge attractions to multiple genders while identifying as lesbian, gay, or heterosexual. This complexity infuses the book at every level, as writers differ not only in their definitions of bisexuality, but also in their politics, spiritualities, sexual practices, and patterns of daily life... The writers discuss coming out, the choice to identify (or not) as bisexual, life experiences, sexual desire, bi community, and political activism... the international scope and glorious polyphony mark the beginning of a new era in bi literature. *Getting Bi* is an astounding achievement."

-Robin Bernstein, Lecturer on Women, Gender & Sexuality & Asst. Director of Studies, Harvard University

**Special Limited Time 33% Discount Offer for
BBWN Readers Only \$10 +\$1.50 shipping.
Free bookmark with every order.**

To order, send a check or m/o for \$11.50 to
Getting Bi BBWN Deal, BRC, PO Box 1026,
Boston MA 02117

Also available at \$14.95 in bookstores
or at www.biresource.org.

New Women's Center groups:

Sistah to Sistah

A discussion group for women of color is open to interested women. Join the group to discuss issues such as racism, oppression, post-traumatic slavery syndrome (PTSS), family and building nurturing relationships. Meets at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., 617-354-8807, Wednesdays, 6:30-8:30.

Healing and Art

On the 2nd and 4th Thursdays of the month, join a self-help group for women trauma survivors at the Cambridge Women's Center. This is a Healing and Art group, but no experience or skill is necessary to join. Art can help describe the past, understand the present, and create the future. The group will support and encourage each member in using art to heal from past trauma.

CALENDAR *continued from page 11*

Nov. 6 ~ Sunday

Boston Bisexual Women's Network (BBWN) "Harvest" brunch, Nov 6th at Melissa's in Malden at noon. Please bring a dish that contains a fruit, veggie (or drink) that is harvested in the fall, i.e. apples, pumpkins, squash etc., but all food and drink is welcome! Contact Melissa for directions and to let her know you are coming: maksimum@mindspring.com, 781-321-0182 or 339-224-1271.

Nov. 8 ~ Tuesday

Married But Not Straight Women's Discussion Group, 7:30-9 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge. See Sept. 13th.

Nov. 9 ~ Wednesday

Boston Queer Poly Women's Discussion Group, 7-8:45 p.m. See Sept. 14th

Nov. 10 ~ Thursday

Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting, 6:30-8:30 p.m. All bi community members welcome. See Sept. 8th.

Nov. 17 ~ Thursday

Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-9 p.m. See Sept. 7th.

Nov. 18 ~ Friday

Bi Women submissions deadline. This issue is a grab-bag of themes - see page 2. Submissions on all subjects welcome. Send submissions to BiWomen, P.O. Box 400639, Cambridge, MA 02140 or email nellythrustmor@aol.com

Nov. 30 ~ Wednesday

BiWomen mailing, 7:30 - 9 PM Location to be determined, please contact Katrina at 617-833-3035 or Deb at 781-777-1054 for details. Join us to label, stuff, seal, and socialize!

Dec. 3 ~ Saturday

Holidays Women's Floating Dance.

See Sept. 24th.



**Annie Goglia
Life Coach**

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kalamari@juno.com

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(Arlington or Cambridge) or by
phone. Free ½ hour consult.

ANNIE'S CLIENTS SAY:

Annie gave me a good push out of a stuck place by asking the right questions. She helped me identify key goals in my life and supported me in taking steps to meet them. With her support, I am doing more of what I really want to do!

Janice Faye Molnar, coaching client

As a life coach, Annie delves beyond the obvious with her remarkable insight into human nature and psychology. Annie helped keep me grounded, keeping my worries at bay, while at the same time opening my eyes to options I had not thought of before.

coaching client

BBWN-Chat: Connecting Online with BBWN

For a number of years, BBWN has had three email lists (also known as "listservs") to facilitate communication within the Boston-area bi women's community. Due to the low traffic on some lists, two of the email lists will no longer be used. Please start using bbwn-chat for all postings about events for or of interest to members of BBWN and other self-identified bi and bi-friendly women in and around the Boston area, communication between self-identified women in the Boston area who would like to help plan, shape, and implement events, programs, actions, and policies of the BBWN, and general discussion between BBWN members.

To subscribe to bbwn-chat, send an e-mail message to: bbwn-chat-request@taxgrrrl.com and include only the word "subscribe" (without the quotes) in the body of the message. We hope to hear from you online!

CALENDAR *continued from page 12*

Sept. 24 ~ Saturday

Womens' Floating Dance, 8:30 - 10:30 p.m. Country and Western theme with lessons in the Two-Step. 21+, \$7.50. VFW Hall, 115 Ballard Street, Worcester, MA. More info: Denise, dpp1029@rcn.com or www.floatingdancefloor.com

Sept 25 ~ Sunday

BBWN 6th Annual Book Swap Brunch at Ellyn's in Somerville, Noon. Along with relaxing and chatting, we'll be looking over books others have brought for the swap. What's left over will go towards the BBWN book drive to raise money for the organization. Please bring newer books that would be appropriate for selling as used online if people aren't interested in them. Please bring the usual potluck dish and/or drinks to share. Contact Ellyn to let her know you are coming: 617-623-5535 or nellythrustmor@aol.com

Oct. 4 ~ Tuesday

Bi Rap at the Women's Center, 7:30-9:00 p.m. Topic: "Halloween: Role playing: Being yourself." See Sept. 6th.

Oct. 5 ~ Wednesday
Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-9 p.m. See Sept. 7th.

Oct. 11 ~ Tuesday

Married But Not Straight Women's Discussion Group, 7:30-9 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge. See Sept. 13.

Oct. 12 ~ Wednesday

Boston Queer Poly Women's Discussion Group, 7-8:45 p.m. See Sept. 14th.

Oct. 13 ~ Thursday

Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting, 6:30-8:30 p.m. All bi community members welcome. See Sept. 8th

Oct. 20 ~ Thursday

Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-9 p.m. See Sept. 7th.

Oct. 23 ~ Sunday

Boston Bisexual Women's Network (BBWN) brunch, noon, at Fennel's in Watertown. Please bring a brunch item and/or drinks to share. Contact Fennel for directions and to let her know you are coming: CoachGold@earthlink.net or

616-875-9082. Email RSVPs preferred, please put "Brunch RSVP" in the subject line.

Oct 29th ~ Sat.

Halloween Women's Floating Dance. See Sept 24.

Nov 1 ~ Tuesday

Bi Rap at the Women's Center, 7:30-9:00 p.m. Topic: What makes a woman attractive? Does it matter whether she is butch or fem? See Sept 6 th.

Nov 2 ~ Wednesday

Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-9 p.m. See Sept th. 1st.

November 4-6 ~ Friday-Sunday

Hartford, Connecticut

Transcending Boundaries

is holding its fourth conference for bisexual/pansexual, trans/genderqueer, and intersex people and our allies. This year's conference will be held in conjunction with America's Conference on Bisexuality.

For more information, contact us at:
E-mail:

transcendingboundaries@gmail.com

Phone: Call Sharon at (860) 559-6150

Web: www.transcendingboundaries.org

CALENDAR *continues on page 10*

Visit
www.biresource.org/bbwn
for more events!



Biversity
Boston is the
mixed gender
bisexual

Network of
Greater
Boston.

www.biversity.org

Ongoing Events
Wednesdays:

Gendertalk, 8:30-9:30 p.m. on WMBR 88.1 FM. Deals with transgender and queer issues.

Women's Club
Nights

Thursdays: Queer-a-oke, 9 p.m.-2a.m., the Midway Cafe, 3496 Washington St. Jamaica Plain. No cover.

Fridays: Retro 80s music to dance to at Toast, 70 Union Square, Somerville, 9 p.m.-1 a.m. \$5 cover.



SUBSCRIPTION RATE

for *BiWomen*
(sliding scale)

___ \$0-\$20 (pay what you can)

___ \$20-\$30 (suggested)

___ \$30-\$100 Extra Special Donor

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BiWomenwants you!!!

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

BBWN, P.O. BOX 400639, Cambridge, MA 02140

The "Bi Office"

is the Bisexual Resource Center, located at 29 Stanhope St., Boston, behind Club Cafe, right next door to Bertucci's and just down the street from the Hard Rock Cafe. For info call 617-424-9595.

Ongoing Events

1st Tuesday:

Bi Women's Rap, 7:30-9:00 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge. For info and discussion topics call 617-354-8807.

The Bi Rap schedule will be once a month starting October 2005. For September, the meetings will be the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays.

2nd Tuesdays:

Married Bi Women's Discussion Group, 7:30-9:00 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge. Info: 617-354-8807.

First Wednesdays, Third Thursdays:

Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-9 p.m. The group meets at the Bisexual Resource Center at 29 Stanhope St. in Boston. Call 617-424-9595 for info.

CALENDAR

Sept. 6 ~ Tuesday

Bi Rap at the Women's Center, 7:30-9:00 p.m. A discussion group for bisexual, bi-friendly, and questioning women. Topic: "Creativity and Sexuality" Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., 617-354-8807.

Sept. 7 ~ Wednesday

Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-8:45 p.m. An informal support group for people who think they may be bisexual or attracted to more than one sex. A small donation is requested to help pay for the space. The group meets at the Bisexual Resource Center at 29 Stanhope St. in Boston. Call 617-424-9595 for info.

Sept. 8 ~ Thursday

Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting, 6:30-8:30 p.m. All bi community members are welcome and encouraged to attend. The meeting is at the Living Center at 29 Stanhope Street in Back Bay.

Sept. 13 ~ Tuesday

Married But Not Straight Women's Discussion Group, 7:30-9 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St. A support group for bi and lesbian women who are married or in long-term relationships. Contact Denise at dpp1029@rcn.com for information. Call 617-354-8807 for directions.

Sept. 14 ~ Wednesday

Boston Queer Poly Women's Discussion Group, 7-8:45 p.m. at the Diesel Cafe, 257 Elm Street in Somerville. T stop is Davis on the Red Line. The group meets to discuss issues relevant to women in the poly community, especially those of interest to queer women. We range from social chatting to more in-depth discussions, depending on what people want to talk about. If you haven't attended before, please email Donna at dalbino83@yahoo.com to arrange a way to recognize the group.

Sept. 15 ~ Thursday

Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-8:45 p.m. See Sept. 7th.

Sept. 17 ~ Saturday

Biversity Brunch, 11:30 a.m. At Johnny D's on Holland St. in Davis Sq. in Somerville. The Davis stop on the Red Line is just across the street. **Biversity planning Meeting** following the brunch at 1 PM

Sept. 20 ~ Tuesday

Bi Rap at the Women's Center, 7:30-9:00 p.m. Topic: "Going out and wondering: is this a date? Are we 'dating'?" See Sept 6th.

Sept. 21 ~ Wednesday

Boundless presents: Creating a Both/And Identity in an Either/Or World

A workshop with *Robyn Ochs* for *Celebrate Bisexuality Day*: 7-9 PM

Having any sexual orientation at all comes with its own baggage. There are particular issues faced by people who identify as bisexual or who use other labels that defy an either/or interpretation of the world. Together we will examine these issues and devise strategies to proudly "be all that we can be." Don't miss our special doorprize raffle of the new book co-edited by Robyn Ochs, *Getting Bi!*

This event is open to people of all genders and orientations. To RSVP (appreciated but not necessary), get directions, or be put on our mailing list, contact Julie at 617-927-6369 or jebin@fenwayhealth.org. Sponsored by Fenway Community Health's *Boundless* program and the Bisexual Resource Center. At the Fenway Community Health Center in Boston.

Sept. 22 ~ Thursday

METROWEST GROUP: Support for Married but not Straight Women II: This is a peer-led FREE support group for women who are married to men but who also are attracted to women or in a relationship with a woman. The group will meet once a month on the fourth Thursday of the month from 7-9 p.m. For location and more information, please contact Denise at MARBLESDGP@rcn.com.

Sept. 23 ~ Friday

Celebrate Bisexuality Day!

The 7th Annual Celebrate Bisexuality

Day dance party will be held at The Eagle, 520 Tremont St, from 8 pm onwards (they close at 2 am).

In downtown Boston, not far from the Living Center, near the corner of Berkeley and Tremont.

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